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AN

EPISTLE

To the several

CONGREGATIONS

Of the

NON-CONFORMISTS.

By Cap. *ROBERT EVERARD:*

Now by Gods Grace a Member of the Holy Catholick Church of Christ.

Shewing the Reasons of his Conversion and submission to the said

CATHOLICK CHURCH.

The Second Edition, containing in it several matereal Additions and Enlargements.

Apost. Crede,
I believe the Holy Catholick Church.

Printed 1664.

EPISTLE

CONGRATULATIONS

to the

NON-CONFORMISTS.

Printed 1664.

An Epistle to several *Non-conformists*, &c.

Dear Friends,

I Cannot doubt but the Reports, which have lately spread concerning me, and of my change and Alteration, in the great Affair of Religion, put you upon an Expectation to hear something from me; and that in Print too: It having been my constant former Method to give an account of my self to the World that way: And although I might very well excuse my self from the same thing now, that scribling humor being only in the dayes of my Ignorance (when God Almighty pleased to permit a Veil to hang between my eyes and his most glorious Truth, Namly the veil of my Pride, and Folly) Yet least from a total silence, the world, which in its own Nature is censorious enough, should apprehend, that I either wanted Charity to my late dear Brethren, or Courage to own the Truth, or that I thought the way unjustifiable, wherein I now VVorship and Adore the God of my Fathers; those good and Pious men, who until the pretended Reformation of *Luther* and his Followers, knew no other way of VVorship or Religion, then this, by which Millions of them were sent into the Bosome of Christ: I have at last resolved to give you a short account of

my ſelf, and what hath befallen me ſince the Happy Reſtauration of our moſt Gracious Soveraign to his Crown and Dignities.

And indeed when I conſider the Love which I have ever had for you, and the returns of Affection, which I have received from many, and moſt of you; I think my ſelf more then ordinarily Engaged, to be free with you in theſe things, as hoping, and in Charity believing, that if I can Convince you of the reaſonableneſs of my Proceedings, you will approve of what I have done; And on the other ſide, if any of you can make it appear, wherein I have done amiſs, you will be ſo juſt (and this Juſtice I here challenge from you) as to ſhew me my Errors.

My carriage whilſt I was in Communion with you, was (I hope) always ſuch, as to give you ſufficient reaſon to believe that I neither was, nor am by-aſſable by Worldly Intereſts, or ſelfiſh Conſiderations: When I profeſt my ſelf againſt Infant Baptiſme, I had run through almoſt (if not altogether) all the ſeveral Profeſſions of Chriſtianity then appearing in this Kingdom, the *Catholique* only excepted, which as I never had any opportunity to examine, as not meeting with any of that party, who were willing to publiſh themſelves to me for ſuch, ſo neither did I think them, or their Principles worthy of my Conſideration, having from the joynt and unanimous conſent of all our Pulpits, believed thoſe of that party to be ſo groſly ignorant, that to diſcourſe with them in relation to Religion, were but to caſt away time and labour.

Being thus prejudiced againſt the *Catholique* party

party, it pleased Almighty God to bring me into the company of a *Lay Gentleman* of that perswasion, and to give me occasion to spend some considerable time with him: I no sooner understood his profession as to Religion, but I began to attempt him, in that, wherein I thought (as conscious of the weakness of his cause) he would never have engaged; but I soon found my mistake by his readiness to embrace discourses of that nature: And I found also, that we had all embraced a most notorious Error, while we suffered our selves to be perswaded, that the *Catholicks* were *an ignorant Generation.*

The Gentleman seemed desirous to examine every thing from the bottome, and *to lay the Axe to the Root*, and truly I thought that very reasonable; as conceiving that where the foundation was unsound, the superstructures were not to be relyed on: He enquired of me therefore in the first place, *whether I was sure and certain that the Christian Religion in general was more true, then the Religions of the Turks, Jews, or any other, which was opposite thereunto?* and *whether I was so certainly, and infallibly assured of this: that it was not possible for me, or for those who taught me Christianity, to be mistaken in this?* And he gave me this Reason for his Question, namely, that if neither I my self, nor those who taught me, that *Christianity* was the only safe way to Salvation, and the only way in which Heaven was to be attained, was or were infallibly certain, or were capable of any mistake, or might in any possibility commit an error in this thing; then as to me, *Christianity* could be no more, *then probably true*; and we could with no

colour of Reason, condemn the *Jew*, *Turk* or *Pagan*, since they were as well perswaded of their several ways, as we could be of ours, upon a *fallible certainty*; and for ought we knew (not having any infallible certainty for our *Christianity*) some of them might be in the *Right*, and we in the *wrong* way. And how could you say to a Jew, *you must become a Christian, if you expect to be saved?* when as if he Examine you strictly and closely in relation to what certainty you have of the truth of *Christianity*, your Answer will amount to no more then this, *You conceive you are in the Right, and you hope and believe you are not mistaken: But it is possible you may be mistaken in this; for every man is a Lyar, every man and all men, and every Church is fallible, and subject to Error, and to be mistaken.* Can such Arguments as these invite a *Jew* or *Turk* to become a *Christian?*

I confess I was extreamly troubled with this difficulty, and knew not how to answer it plainly, and without apparent shuffling, and declining the question, which I plainly did, by urging, that if he intended to call the Religion which *Christ* Established in the world into question, and to make a doubt of the main and Grand Principle of *Christianity* which we both of us agreed to be true, I should treat no farther; and that if himself doubted of the Truth of *Christs* Religion, I was not prepared to Dispute the point.

This Answer seemed very strange even to my self, but it seemed more strange to me, that I should finde my self Gravelled in such a question as was fit for every one to answer. However

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my Opponent used me Gently and Sweetly, and without the least shew of insulting over my weakness, he told me that in reason I ought to answer this difficulty; for (replied he) though it may be true, and is most certainly true, that *the Christian Religion, upon the true Grounds upon which it is founded, is infallibly certain and Divine*; yet upon the Grounds upon which you may found your belief thereof, it may possibly not be true or certain as to you: For Example, suppose you are told a thing by a known or common perjured person, and upon his word you believe it; you cannot be certainly assured that the thing is true, because such an Infamous, common notorious Lyar tells you so, but the thing is really to you doubtful, nay more probably false then true, and yet the thing in it self is true: so if in the Apostles time one had believed *Christianity* to be true, not because *the Apostles* taught him so, but because *Simon Magus* affirmed it to him, in this case who sees not that such a mans faith had not been true, but that the whole thing to him had been uncertain, the belief of it being grounded upon a wrong Foundation, which was no wayes certain. From all which it is evident, that Faith grounded upon a wrong foundation may possibly be a relying upon the Traditions of men, but cannot be that Divine Faith, which God requires at our hands as a condition without which we shall not be saved: Consequently, that the late wilde and loose Opinion, which is now so prevalent in the World, *That men of differing Faiths may be saved*, is without all peradventure erroneous and dangerous, as

tending not only to countenance Schisms, which are Rebellious in the Church, but also from a parity of Reason, Rebellions in the State. It is like *Fighting for the King against the Person and Authority of the King*: Like *fighting the Lords Battails against the Lords Anointed*. Indeed the late Usurped Authorities made great use of this error, to patch up several Rebellious Factions, disagreeing in Faith amongst themselves into one seeming Brother-hood of pretended Saints, to destroy the Common Father of our Country: But I have charity to hope that the late signal Providences of God to this Nation, in restoring unto us our Soveraign, have convinced all good men of the errors of those wayes. And yet since Mr. *Baxter* hath lately had the confidence to broach an Opinion publickly in Print upon the same Old Principles, and to maintain in his Treatise against Mr. *Williams Johnson*, that *an Heretick may be a member or part of the Catholick Church of Christ*; which is all one as to say, That an Heretick may have true Faith: whereby the Ground which I have here layd seems to be destroyed. Give me leave to urge one Argument out of Mr. *Johnsons* answer to Mr. *Baxter*, for the total destroying of this Error, and I am the rather induced to do this, as supposing Mr. *Johnsons* answer (though it hath fully silenced Mr *Baxter* beyond all possibility of replying with Reason) not to have come into the hands of many of the Non-conformists. The Argument which I shall give is this: *Whosoever hath true Faith, believeth the thing believed, or the material object of Faith for the Divine Authority of God revealing it.* But *no Heretick believeth*

This is taken out of Mr. *Johnsons* reply to Mr. *Baxter*, called *Novelty Repressed*, Fo. 142, 143 &c.

lieveth so. Therefore *no Heretick hath true Faith.* The *Major* is granted by all, because *Christian Faith must rest upon Gods Revelation, as its formal object.* The *Minor* is proved thus, *Whosoever believes the material Object of Faith, or the thing believed, for the Divine Authority of God revealing it, must believe all things which are as sufficiently propounded to him, to be revealed by God, as are those Articles, which he doth believe. And must believe, nothing as a Revelation of God, which is as sufficiently declared to him to be erroneous, or not a Revelation, as the Articles of Faith are to be revealed.* But *every Heretick either refuseth to believe something, which is so sufficiently propounded to him to be revealed from God, or believes something, as a Revelation, which is so sufficiently declared to him to be erroneous, or not revealed from God*; Therefore *no Heretick hath true Faith.* The first part of this *Major* is proved thus: *Whosoever refuseth to believe, what is so sufficiently propounded to be revealed by God, either refuseth all, that is so propounded, or believes some things, and refuseth to believe others as sufficiently propounded, as those which he believes: If he refuseth all, he can have no true Faith, for he believes nothing, and is therefore no Christian: If he believes some, and refuseth others equally propounded, then he believes not those things, which he doth believe for the Divine Authority revealing* (for when two things are equally propounded to the understanding, they ought to work equally upon it) *but upon his own wilful choice or private judgement refuseth some, and assents to others.* As to the second part of the aforesaid *Major*, viz. *That no man can have*

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true Christian Faith, who believes any thing as a Revelation, which is as sufficiently propounded to him to be Erroneous, as the Articles by him believed, are propounded to be Revelations: the very same Authority which affirms the one, denying the other. Suppose, the same Authority acknowledged doth sufficiently propound to a *Calveniſt* the Articles of Faith as revealed from God, and at the same time assures him, that his conceit of the *Popes* being the great *Antichriſt* was never revealed from God, but is a manifeſt error in Faith: In this case our *Calveniſt* must disbelieve that propounding Authority, and thereby lose his Faith in the former Articles by him believed, and have no true faith in the first; or he must believe the same Authority in the second, because it is the same Authority in both: For that very Authority which propounds the Articles of Faith, as revealed of God, propounds the other as not revealed, and as contrary to Gods Revelation. By all which it is most evident, that if your Faith be built upon a wrong Foundation, it is of no value, nor doth it give you any certainty, nor is it indeed *Faith*, but *Humor* and *Opinion*.

Nay farther, If we should say that all Congregations called Christians are parts of the Catholick Church, it would follow that no Congregation of Christians could be Hereticks, because Hereticks must be obstinate against the Doctrine of the Universal or Catholick Church; but if these be part of that Church, they cannot be said to be obstinate against the Doctrine of that Church, in regard themselves are part of it, and it is impossible they should be obstinate against them-

themselves or their own Doctrine; besides, the testimony of the Catholick Church concerning what is pretended to be *revealed* or *not revealed* by God, must oblige all persons, who are sufficiently informed of it, to believe what it saith and proposeth, and all are bound to stand to her Judgement: But if all Congregations called Christians, or any two Churches differing in their Testimonies or Judgements should be parts of the Catholick Church, their Testimonies or Judgement could not oblige any one to believe what they both say, propose or determine: First, because one contradicts the other, and it is impossible to believe contradictions at one and the same time: Secondly, if Witnesses or Authority do not agree in their Evidence and Testimonies and that they be equal in Authority, no man is obliged to believe either but to suspend his Judgement. Therefore the Catholick Church must be and can be no other then *One only* Congregation agreeing in *One* Faith.

This Discourse seemed to me so convincing, that I could not but agree unto it; and therefore I told him as a full answer to his first question, that *I embraced Christianity, and that sort of Christianity to which I adhearedin opposition to all others, because the Scriptures which are Gods Word, taught me so to do, and that I believed the Scriptures to be Gods Word from the infallible testimony of Gods Spirit bearing witness with my spirit, that they were Gods Words*; and *that I was fully convinced, that this proceeded from the infallible testimony of Gods Spirit, from a certain knowledge and feeling which I had of the same within my self, and in my one Conscience.*

To

To all which it was mildly replyed, that upon the Grounds which I had laid, and whereon I founded my self, it was im possible for me to be infallibly assured, that this testimony which I mentioned was infallibly the testimony of the Spirit of God: For having granted the Protestant Principle, that *I was not infallible*, that *no man or number of men was or were infallible*; this Spirit which I talked of, might (for ought I knew) be the spirit of error. And for farther evincing thereof, I was desired to reflect on these Scriptures, Jer. 17. 9. *the heart of Man is deceitful above all things, who can know it?* Eccles. 9. 1. *No man knoweth Love or Hatred by all that is before them.* And to consider the strange delusion, which bewitched the Angel, or Bishop of *Laodicea*, Revel. 3. 17. *Because thou sayest I am Rich and encreased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* How much was he deceived in his own judgement of his own Estate? In fine, what would you (said he) answer to an Arrian, or Jew, or Turk, should they urge the like knowledge, and feeling, with the like confidence, to prove they were in the truth, and Christianity a delusion? What you would reply to them, suppose as said unto your self, and see if it will not satisfie.

In the mean time (said he) you seem to imply, and so to grant that we ought to have an infallible certainty of what we believe with Divine Faith; this the Apostles had in the time of our blessed Saviours conversing with them upon earth, they had sufficient to prevail with

with their wills, to command their understandings into the belief of his being God, consequently infallible, and consequently that whatsoever he taught was to be assented unto as infallibly true, without being questioned by our little feeble limited Reasons. And this was necessary for the Church then, otherwise they could not have been sufficiently assured that what Christ taught them was true, consequently it would not have been a sin in them to have doubted. This infallible assurance also the Christians who lived in the Apostles times and after the Ascension of our Lord, enjoyed; they had sufficient to enduce them to a belief, that the Holy Apostles were infallible Guides and Teachers; and that whatsoever they taught and commanded them, was as infallibly true, as if God had immediately spoken to them the same things, and no more to be doubted, contradicted, or disputed against by their reasons (which doubtless were as good and strong as ours) then the immediate words, commands, or dictates of Almighty God; otherwise those who refused to hear and obey them had been in no fault, and it would have been an unsufferable Pride and presumption in St. *Paul* to have required such an absolute submission to what he taught, as to oblige the Christians of his time not to have believed an Angel from Heaven teaching contrary to what he taught them. Hence it is, that the remaining writings (for so much as we have of them) of the Blessed Apostles, are by all Christians esteemed, as the Words of God. And this was necessary in the Age after Christ for the Church of God,

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namely in the Apoſtles times, to have a living infallible way of direction, in ſo much as had we then lived, and had encountred with any doubts or difficulties relating to Religion, and to the true meaning of what was either ſpoken or written by any Apoſtle, or by all the Apoſtles, we ſhould without all doubt have made our immediate recourſe to them, ſome or one of them, for the ſolving of ſuch doubts, and the explayning of ſuch difficulties; and ſhould have received and ſubmitted unto ſuch ſolutions as made by God himſelf, without ever interpoſing our own reaſons or ſenſes in oppoſition. This we ſee was the courſe taken in the *fifteenth of the Acts*, when certain doubts were ariſen amongſt ſome of the then Chriſtians, the *Apoſtles* meet in a *Council* they conſidered the things they determined with an *It ſeemeth good unto the Holy Ghoſt and to us.* Their Decrees and Canons were obeyed, and ſubmitted unto by the whole, and the Diſputes were at an end. But ſuppoſe ſome diſpute had ariſen touching the ſence and meaning even of ſome of thoſe Decrees, muſt not it have been interpreted by ſome judicial Authority? Doubtleſs yes. And queſtionleſs the then Chriſtians would have appealed or applyed to the ſame Authority that made thoſe Canons and Decrees, for the interpretation of them, and would have ſubmitted to ſuch interpretations; otherwiſe it would have been with the Primative Chriſtians then, as it is with you now, every own would have framed his own interpretation, thoſe who had been Maſters of the greateſt Wit, Power, or Intereſt, would have framed Parties or

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Churches to themſelves; and in fine, *the Sword of the Fleſh, and not the Spirit of God* muſt have given the Rule and Law to Chriſtianity; they would have been ſo far from any poſſibility of maintaining *The Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*, from being *One body*, that they would have divided into as many parts (to ſpeak without grateing) as you now are, and have gone to Cuffs, and raiſed Wars for the deciding of Controverſies, as we have ſeen you do ſince you divided your ſelves from the Holy Catholick Church of Chriſt.

It is not hard for you to imagine into what confuſion theſe Diſcourſes put my poor ſoul, to hear ſuch things, ſo great evidences of Reaſon produced by a *private Gentleman* of that party, whom I had believed ſo *ignorant*. I had oftentimes in Diſputations, both publickly and privately encountred, and (I though) worſted ſeveral of the Engliſh Clargy in thoſe points wherein I differed from them. But I found nothing now to ſay againſt theſe Principles, which I had yet hitherto ſuppoſed the moſt ridiculous, that any people could imagine to ſet up. Well, I could no longer conteſt, but reſolved to have recourſe unto *Almighty God* by Prayer for his Divine aſſiſtance, and to make it my buſineſs according to the utmoſt of my poor skill and underſtanding, to take a full view of the Grand Principles of the *Catholick Faith*, and of *Chriſtianity*; and laying aſide all prejudices, Pride and Humour; I reſolved by the aſſiſtance of God to embrace and ſubmit unto whatſoever I ſhould underſtand to be moſt agreeable with his moſt holy Will and Pleaſure,

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without taking any regard to worldly interest, or the censures of men, which I had reason to believe would run high against me. And the better to enable me in his search and examination I borrowed from this Gentleman several books and treatises, from whence I made several Collections, the heads of which I now recommend to your considerations, they being such as had (by the Gracious assistance of Almighty God) such a prevailing power upon my understanding, as to convince me of the errors of the way, wherein I then was, and to bring me to the knowledge of the Divine Truths of the Catholick and Christian Faith.

The Books which I here intend are *The Question of Questions*, the before mentioned *Novelty repressed* with *Fiat Lux*, and that Elaborate Treatise called *Infidelity unmasked*, or *a Confutation of a Book Published* by Mr. *Wil. Chillingworth.*

I gathered from the true interpretation of that Text of Scripture, Heb. 11. 6. *Without Faith it is impossible to please God.* And of that Mar. 16. 16. *He that believeth shall not be damned.* And of that other Ephes. 4. 5. *There is but one Faith, and one Baptisme, one Lord Iesus.* That the Faith which was to save me, and by the which I was to please God, must certainly be the *true Faith*, which cannot be found in contrary Opinions, it being but *One*, and of contraries, One only can be true. I also collected from that Text. 2 Cor. 10. 5. *Bringing into Captivity every thought, to the Obedience of Christ* That this *Faith* or believing was to be seated in the understanding, that the understanding was to submit, not dispute. And that this Act *To believe*, was a Command or Precept of Almighty God, who will have his Will obeyed by all his Subjects

Subjects, and the not obeying of which is punished with eternal Damnation. Lastly, I found from that Text Heb. 10.23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised.* That Faith, if truely Divine, must be an *infallible* assent of our understanding, submitting it self obediently to believe the Revelations of God. For otherwise Faith and consequently all Religion, may be no more then fancy, or Opinion, and then no waies certain, and if so, then no Obligation.

From whence I thought it did very naturally follow; *first*, that *there must be some means appointed by God, by which we may know this one true Faith from all false Opinions*, for to require us to believe upon pain of Damnation, and not to give us any means whereby we may know what to believe, were to require us to make Bricks without Straw. *Secondly*, that *these means must be infallible*, for we cannot be brought to an infallible ascent by fallible and uncertain means, and God would not require us to ascent to an Authority which may deceive us. *Thirdly*, that *the understanding must submit to these means under pain of Damnation*; for if the understanding were at liberty to submit, or not to submit, to the means by which Faith is conveyed unto us, it would be no fault not to believe, consequently God could not justly damne us for not believing: Besides, whosoever shall refuse to be governed by those means, and that Authority which God hath appointed to govern him, is a Rebel against God. *Fourthly*, that *two men of two differing Faiths or beliefs cannot be saved*; for they both of them, knowing that they are bound to be guided

and governed by those means which God hath appointed to convey faith unto them, and one of them flatly refusing to submit, this person who refuseth, must be guilty of disobedience to Gods command, and consequently cannot be saved. *Fifthly*, that *ignorant people by such reasonable diligence, as is very tolerable to humane frailty, and very possible for them may come to the knowledge of these means*; For otherwise God would have appointed means which would be unprofitable to the end, and the far greater number of Souls for whom Christ dyed, would not be sufficiently provided for; by the sweet Providence of God. By which that Prophesie would be ineffectual, Esay. 35. *Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, behold your God will come and save you, then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped* &c. *And one high-way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the Holy way, the wayfaring men, though Fools shall not err therein.*

And thus far I met with nothing but what I esteemed very agreeable with all sorts of people, professing themselves Christians. All that I ever met with seemed to grant that there must be *a Way*, and *a Rule*; there must be *means* appointed, there must be a *governing Power* to judge and decide all doubts, and teach us the true way to Heaven with certainty. But *who this Rule or Judge is*, that is the difficulty, for when once we have found it, I think all persons will agree that they are obliged to submit unto it, as to the Apostles if they were actually living, or to Christ himself: This therefore

I thought to be the only question that I was to gain satisfaction unto: I therefore ceased to enquire after this Doctrine, or that other Article, as believing, that if I could once find out this *Rule*, this *Judge* which God had appointed as the means to direct me, and to which I was to submit, as to that Authority which God had appointed to Rule and Govern me, to teach me what I was, and what I was not to believe; I should no more scruple to believe what that Authority should teach me to be revealed by God, then if I heard God himself speaking: And I was no way discouraged in my resolution to search, when I considered, that as God spoke in Ancient times by the mouths of his Prophets, before and after the Scriptures were written; and by the mouthes of his Apostles before, and after the New-Testament *was* written; and that the writing of what God directed to be written, did not lessen the power of God, but that he might still direct by the mouthes of his Prophets and Apostles, so possibly I might find God still speaking by an Authority, which hitherto I had not been acquainted with.

I found all the Rules and means proposed by every party to amount to four in the whole. One party would set up a claim to the *Spirit* directing them, and speaking to their spirits. Another will have every mans own natural *Reason* to be this Rule and Judge. A third will set up *sola Scriptura*. And the fourth assigneth the *Holy Catholick Church of Christ Visible on Earth*, to be that Judge and Director. And finally, that medium appointed by God himself for the ends before mentioned, and to which all Christians

were to submit. Other then these I never heard of any, for I always esteemed the *Quakers Light* to be either the *Spirit* or *Natural Reason*, and I resolved to rank it under one of these considerations, by a name more known to the world, then that which they have given it. And therefore these I resolved most carefully to examine.

As to the first touching the *Spirit, bearing witness in secret with our spirits*, or in plainer terms *the Private Spirit*, I considered that this could not be the *means* to convey and teach Faith unto the World, nor the *Rule, Guide*, or *Judge*, which I enquired after; nor indeed the *true Spirit* of God, which he promised to his Apostles, and their Successors: because *first*, the *Spirit of God* cannot proceed unreasonably. But it is not agreeable with Reason, that the World, to whom the Faith is to be conveyed, should believe any of their pretended *spirits*, to be the Spirit of God, without any other proof then barely the *affirmations* of the pretenders; and against a sense of Scripture, a Tradition, and Authority continued amongst all Christian Churches, for One thousand five hundred years: Therefore this is no sufficient Proposal of true Faith to the World. *Secondly*, those who pretend this *Guidance* do not believe *God* but *themselves* only, and their own perswasions, which tell them they have the Spirit of God; for if we ask such a person, why he believes that the spirit which he pretends to be guided by, is the Spirit of God? he will tell you, *He is verily perswaded it is so, and hath inward feelings and workings, which perswade him to believe so*; If you again say to him, that he is

obliged to give you some evident Reason or else some convincing and sufficient Authority, or Testimony, to believe that spirit which he speaks of, to be the Spirit of God; in regard that if it be the Spirit of God, he is then *infallible* in his teaching; and both you, and all the World are obliged under pain of Damnation, to believe what he delivers as matter of Faith, to be true; he will give you no other answer, but this, *I am sure it is the Spirit of God which directs me, and if you do not judge so, it is because you have not the Spirit of God And I shall stand in judgement against you at the last day, because you refuse to believe me, For I say I have the Spirit of God, and I ought to be believed by you, for I am a good man, and an Honest man, And I believe my self*; No other *Reason*, or *Evidence*, or *Testimony*, or *Authority*, he can give none: Was this that Method which Christ took when he said? *If I do not the work of my Father believe not me* or my Words, *But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works?* John 10. 37, 38. *Thirdly*, this pretention of a *Private Spirit* is expressly against 2 Pet. 1. 20. *No Prophesie of Scripture is of Private interpretation*; the reason of which is this, because there is no man (if not confirmed in Grace) who may not be an obstinate Heretick against the true sence of Scripture in controverted Texts? But no man can be obstinate against his own private perswasion or Private Spirit; that is, against his own private interpretation or the sence which his own Private Spirit puts upon any Text. If you say it is impossible for any of you to be Hereticks, because you are guided by the Spirit of God, which is infallible: I answer, That it will fol-

low that it is impossible for any other to be an Heretick or to be obstinate against your spirit or interpretations: The Reason is this, None can be said to be obstinate, who is without all means or possibility of being convinced, for if there be no means to convince one, who is in an error, how can he be said to be obstinate? Now it is not possible for any who holds Doctrines or Articles of Faith contrary to you, who pretend to be guided by the Spirit, as aforesaid, to be convinced by you of his error; For their is no way to convince such an erring person, but by either clear Reason or lawful Testimony of Witnesses or Authority: Reason you can pretend none, by which you may prove your Spirit or Interpretation to be of God, and for lawful Witnesses or Authority you have none more then your own single word and testimony in your own cause. *Fourthly*, there is no man in the world, Jew or Turk, Pagan or Christian, but may (if he will put on confidence enough) affirm that he is taught inwardly by God; many of all sorts do this and yet teach contradictions, some therefore must be deceived, therefore this is not the *Rule*. Nor hath this any effect amongst those who pretend it; for by this none of them ever as yet reconciled any differences, but each pretender grows perverse and obstinate, and seperates from all who pretend to have the *spirit* as well as himself, and so endless *Heresies*, and *Schisms* arise without any possibility to allay them, or for either the Learned, or the Ignorant to judge which of these *bold pretenders* hath a *true spirit*: In the mean time it will not (possibly) be hard for a sober man to find that they are all of them governed by the *Spirit of*

Error, who pretend thus audaciously, if he considers well the Rule which St. *John* gives for discerning the *Spirit of Truth* from the *spirit of error* 1 Joh. 4. 6. *We are of God, he that knoweth God heareth us, he that is not of God heareth not us: Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth from the spirit of Error.* As if he should have said, Christ hath placed Apostles, and Teachers, and Doctors, to govern and teach his Church, we are those, and therefore of God; therefore whoever pretends to know the Will of God, must hear and obey and submit unto us, or it is evident what he saith, is but a pretence, and he doth not indeed know God, nor is he of God; for if he did know God, or were of God, he would certainly hear us. Here therefore is your *Rule* to know *true* from *false* spirits: The *Spirit of Truth* is alwaies remaining with, that *Authority* which God hath placed in the World, to teach Truth to the World, and bring them to the Faith; and all that are actuated and lead by *this spirit*, are taught by it to submit to *this Authority*, and to hear those whom God hath sent and doth send by *this Authority*, since *Faith* only *comes by hearing* those who are *truly sent*; but the *spirit of error* is a *spirit of Pride*, which refuseth to submit to *that Authority* which God hath set up, and *heaping to themselves Teachers, having itching ears, turn away their ears from the Truth*, 1 Tim. 4. *v.* 3. 4. By this I saw, that although the *Rule* and the *Judge*, which I looked for, must have the assistance and influence of the *Holy Ghost*, the *Spirit of Truth*, yet it could not be every private man or woman who laid claim to such influences, and who could no more satisfie another that

they are guided by the Spirit of Truth, then many who are cast into Bedlam for affirming themselves to be God, can evince themselves to be so, and whose affirmations (for ought I know) are as concluding as the other. In this therefore I was satisfied, and the rather, because if we should once admit of this *Rule*, we must necessarily allow as lawful and justifiable, all the abominations, treasons and mischiefs, which have at any time been committed, by any the most wilde *Enthusiasts*, that have ever lived in the world. Did not *John* of *Leyden* and our late *Iames Nayler* pretend to be guided by the *Spirit*, when they uttered their blasphemies not to be named? Did not those *unhappy miscreants*, who were justly executed for the horrid murther of our late *Gracious Soveraign*, pretend the guidance of the *Spirit* in their pretended seeking of God, in that barbarous action? Do not *every Sect* amongst you pretend to follow the directions of the Spirit, even in those Principles wherein you oppose each other? Nay, did not *Mahomet* pretend to be taught by the Spirit of God, and give greater seeming evidences for his pretended illuminations, then any of you have been able to do, thereby deceiving so great a part of mankind? What can you say for your selves any of you, which these *Enthusiasts*, who have gone before you, did not alledge to maintain their Errors? But the *Rule* and *Iudge* which God hath appointed, is to be a *Rule* and *Iudge* to all the world, and capable of being known and heard by all, and cannot contradict it self, nor must it be contradicted by any, under pain of Damnation, because it is *Infallible*: it is such a *Rule* and *Iudge* as hath had,

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and alwaies must have a being in the world, from the time of Christ; until the end of the world, alwaies teaching the same Faith in all things without varying. And if you cannot shew this to have been in your pretended *Rule*, and *Judge* the *Private Spirit*; you ought to lay aside your folly with the consequences of it, as destructive even to *humane societies*; and you know by experience, that where several parties pretend to several contradictory designs, upon several pretended directions of this pretended guide, *the Spirit*; the strongest Party and Sword calls it self, and upon the Vote will prove it self the best and most convincing *Spirit*; and I believe will force the *weaker spirits* to submit, or cry; for you have no other test by which to try your contradicting *spirits*, even in points of greatest concernment, but *force* and *success*; If you have, I pray inform me what it is.

The next thing which I considered was *Reason* or the natural Reason of every man, which I found could not possibly be this Rule and Judge that I sought for, because first, it was to *submit* as a *Subject* and *Vassal* to that *Rule* and *Judge*, therefore it could not be it. *Secondly*, it was *fallible*, and strangly apt to mistake, which is against the Nature of this *Rule* and *Judge* to be; For if God should oblige us upon pain of damnation to submit unto, and to be governed and ruled by an *Authority* that might deceive us, and might teach us that for a truth which is not, we should be bound to believe that for true which is not so, and yet be damned for not believing the Truth. *Thirdly*, if *Reason* were to be this *Rule* and *Judge*, then

then it would follow, contrary to the Scripture, that *it is not impossible to please God without Faith*, for *Reason* would teach us sufficiently how to please God; yea it would be a breach of this *Rule* to believe what we do not understand, it would likewise follow that every Religion would be the truth, consequently contradictions would be true, consequently there would be many Religions, and not only not one faith but no faith at all; for Reason excludeth Faith, and there is scarce a man living but his reason differs from anothers, understandings and judgements differing as much as Faces: Therefore no one that followes his own Reason could in justice be condemned by God, consequently all men would be saved, unless peradventure you will say, that in a business of such consequence, as the Salvation of our Souls, our *private Reason* perswades us to prefer the Authority of such as are wiser then our selves before our own judgements, which is most true; But I then, infer that *Roman Catholicks* are the most rational people in the world, and consequently have the best Religion as acting most conformably to *Reason*; for they rely upon the Authority of *General Councils*, consisting of the ablest and most Learned men of all Nations, which is the greatest Authority to be found on earth, especially if they have the assistance of the *Holy Ghost*, as it appears they have both by the testimony of the Scripture, and the constant tradition of all Ages. *Lastly*, that would probably be the truth, and the *true Faith* to one man this year, which seven years hence would be an error, and a *false faith*, to the same person; for in such a compass of time a mans *reason* hath

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such an alteration. Upon these grounds I concluded, that certainly God in his good Providence, had appointed a more sure *Guide*, *Rule* and *Judge*, to bring me to the infallible Faith of *Christianity*, then my own *Reason*.

The next thing in order to be considered, was the *sole Scriptures*, whether these were *solely* sufficient of themselves and without the Church of God to teach us the *true Faith*, and from time to time to direct Rule and Govern us, and to be this *Rule* and *Judge*, to whose sentence and determination, to whose directions and *Authority* all were to submit, and which was to supply unto us the place of Christ and the Apostles. And indeed I found this highly contended for, and several Reasons urged for it.

First, the Words of our Saviour, Joh. 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think you have Eternal Life, and they are they which testify of me.* But to this I found several answers given, which to me were a satisfaction. For *first*, it doth not appear whether this in the Original be the *Imperative* or *Indicative* Mood. St. *Cyril* with whom *Beza* agrees, takes it in the *Indicative* Mood, and then the sence runs thus; *You do search the Scriptures*, because in them you have an *Opinion* that you have *Eternal Life*, and yet even *those Scriptures*, are so far from being against me that *they testify of me*; so that I shall be no waies prejudiced if I should joyn issue with you, and try my cause by your own *Rule*. And in this sence, they are so far from proving what they are produced for, that they prove directly the contrary; they are so far from being a command to all to read, or search, or make Scripture

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the sole Rule and Judge, that they rather seem a reprehension to all who shall frame that conceit of the Scriptures. *Secondly*, these words cannot extend to prove this conclusion, if they were in the *Imparative* Mood (which can never be proved infallibly) because they cannot be profitable to work Faith in those who cannot read, who are the far greater part of mankind. *Thirdly*, this cannot be the sence of these words, because they would then have excluded Christ Jesus himself, and after him his Apostles, from being the Infallible means by which true Faith was to be taught to the world, and who were doubtless in their time the infallible Judges for the deciding of all Controversies, and the determining true Faith, from false Opinions, and to whose judgements all upon pain of Damnation were to submit.

The second Reason urged for sole Scripture was, 2 Tim. 3. v. 15. 16. *From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation through Faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.* But I found that neither would this Text (so much and indeed so totally reply upon) serve as a proof for what it was pretended, namely to prove that the *Scripture alone* was the way, the Rule, the Means, the governing power appointed by God to judge, and to decide all doubts, and to teach us the true Faith, and the true way to Heaven with certainty. The Reasons why this Text would not

prove

prove this were these. First, that which is spoken there of Scriptures is, that they were able *through* or by *Faith in Christ Jesus to make wise*, and that they are *profitable* to the ends there mentioned: But this *Profitable* is not sole sufficient, and this *Able* through or by Faith is not *solely* able, but supposeth Faith already, and therefore pretends not that they are the means preceding faith to beget faith. It was agreed by all, that the Scriptures to one that had faith already, and to the man of God, who would submit to such Interpretation of Scriptures as God should teach him, and hold forth unto him by that Authority which God had appointed to Guide, Rule, Teach and Govern him, and to whom God had appointed him to submit, were exceedingly *profitable and able to make him wise unto salvation*. But to one who had not the faith, and who did not already believe them to be the Word of God, they were no way useful or profitable, *for Faith comes by hearing, not by reading*. *Secondly*, those Scriptures there meant, were those which St. *Timothy* had *known from his youth*, which were the *Old Testament only*; consequently by this Rule they are solely sufficient, consequently the New Testament is the best and *necessary*, not the *Preaching* of *Christ*, or the *Apostles*, not the *Sacraments* of the New Testament, so that this Scripture either proves too much, if admitted in the sence for which it is produced, or it proves nothing to this purpose. *Thirdly*, the word *All Scripture* must signifie either *every Scripture* as the Original word πᾶσα ought to be rendered; or *All* the Scriptures that ever were, or *All* the Scriptures that were when

this Text was written, or *All* the Scriptures that we now have. If it be *every Scripture*, then it proves too much, and consequently nothing to the present intent, for then all the Scriptures have only one book are useless. If it be *All* that ever were, we have them not, as I shall shew hereafter, consequently our Rule is maymed, and God hath not given us sufficient means for the ends proposed. If *All* the Scriptures that were when this Text was written, then at least all that have been written since were superfluous, at least not necessary. If *All* that we now only have, and that the Apostle foresaw what would come to our hands in *England*, I would gladly have some assurance why the Text must be thus understood and no otherwise.

In fine, if from those words of our dearest Lord, *These things I say that ye might be saved*, John v. 34. We are not to conclude that those very words or things then spoke, were *sole sufficient* for Salvation, but only that they were *conducing* to our Salvation; so from neither of the Texts before urged, or any other that can be urged, can we conclude, that the Scriptures are *solely sufficient*, but only that they are *conducing* to our Salvation, and that the directions therein included if followed truly, and according to the intent of the Holy Ghost, are able to make him who is already a good Christian, wise unto Salvation.

Other Texts I met with, as *To the Law and to the Testimony*, and *keep my Words and Statutes*, and *depart not from my Words*, and *thou shalt not add unto my Word*; And *if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this Book*, and the like.

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But none of these Texts did appear to me to make any thing for this Opinion of *sole Scripture*; for *first*, I found none that did deny, but that the *Laws* and *Testimonies*, the *Words* and *Statutes* of God were to be observed, only it is questioned whither all things that God required to be believed or done, were *particularly* written in the *Scriptures*: And for this I found no one or more places in *Scripture*, which could prove it. Indeed I met with a peremptory flat proof to the contrary, 2 Thes. 2. 15. *Hold the Traditions which ye have been taught whither by Word, or by Epistle.* It seems St. *Paul* did not deliver in *writing* all things which they were to hold; and it is also very clear from this place, that in the *Scripture* this phraze, *Word* is not alwaies to be intended the *written Word*, but that there was a *Word of God unwritten*, which St. *Paul* calls also *Traditions*, which those Christians and all Christians were to *hold* and to *stand fast unto*, as well as to the *written Word*: if we follow the teachings of St. *Paul*, and the *Word* of God *written* by St. *Paul*, nor did it appear to me by any Text, that the *sole Scripture* or *Scripture alone*, could teach one to understand it self: I was convinced that the *words* and *letters* contained in the Scriptures, were not alone the *Word of God written*; but the principal part of the Scripture or *Gods written Word*, is the *true sense* and *meaning* of *those words* and *letters*, which are written and set down together. Now the question is, whether the *Scriptures* which every one may have for his money; *that is*, the *Words* and *Letters* printed, or written, be *solely sufficient* by its self, to teach Faith unto the world, and teach us all things in *particular*,

Law, what we are to believe and do, and to teach us the *principal part* of *Scripture*, which is the *true sence* and *meaning* of those words and letters? I found no Text that did affirm this; but I found what seemed to deny it, *Acts* 8. 30. 31. The *Eunuch* a person of *great Authority* and quality, consequently as *wise* as any of us, was *reading of the Scripture* (*i. e.* the words) consequently, as *well minded* and *religious* as any of us, hath St. *Philip* sent to him by God; consequently, he was as much *in the Favour of God* as any of us, well, could this *Great, Wise, Religious* Person understand the sence of Scripture? were the *words written* sufficient *alone* to teach him the *meaning* of the *Scripture*? St. *Philip* asks him the question, which he answers in this words, *How can I, except some man should guide me*? Is not this all one, as to say, the *Scripture alone is not sufficient to guide us, but we must be taught* by some *man* or *men*, some *living guide*? so the 2 Per. 3. 16. *The unlearned and unstable wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction*; consequently, it is necessary that they should have some *man* or *men*; some *living guide* to teach them, that they may avoid and escape destruction; consequently *Scripture alone is not sufficient*.

And now that I clearly found that no Arguments which were urged for the sole sufficiency of Scripture, and to prove that the Scripture alone is this infallible judge, or rule or means appointed by God as aforesaid, did prove the Scriptures to be so, or satisfie the point for which they were produced. I resolved to see what could be said against this common general Opini-

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on of almoſt all who oppoſe the Church of *Rome*, why the Scriptures could not be this Rule and Judge.

The *firſt* reaſon that I found was, that it did never yet appear to anſwer this end; for thoſe who pretend the moſt to conſult the Scriptures, do moſt of all men diſagree in matters of faith, and in interpreting theſe Scriptures. *Luther* the firſt beginner of Proteſtants, gathered a Flock of followers, which divided into ſeveral other ſubdiviſions, contradicting each other. So *John Calvin* raiſed a party in *Geneva*, of whom *Luther* ſaith expreſly Tom. 7. Fo. 380. *I ſcarce ever read of a more deformed Hereſie, which preſently in the beginning, was divided into ſo many heads, ſuch a number of Sects, not one like another, and ſuch variety and diſagreeing of Opinions.* And have we not diviſions enough in this poor Kingdom, and amongſt thoſe who call themſelves Proteſtants? Are there not (beſides the Church of *England* which I pretend not to treat of becauſe eſtabliſhed) *Preſbyterians, Independents, Anabaptiſts, Fifth-Monarchy-men, Quakers*, &c. Maintaining Doctrines contrary to each other? Do not all or moſt of theſe pretend the *Scripture alone* to be the Rule and Judge? and doth this Rule or Judge anſwer the end for which they pretend it was delivered to the World? I remember it is excellently well inferred by the Learned Author of the Book Intituled *Fiat Lux*, That it is impoſſible for any one of theſe parties (which I muſt now crave leave to call Sects) with reaſon to cenſure or condemn any of the others, although never ſo different from themſelves even in points by them eſteemed *fundamentals*; ſince each of

them have their uncontroulable Plea for themselves, that *their faith is in every respect conformable to what they understand to be the true sence and meaning of the Scriptures*, which they all agree to be the *sole* and *only* Rule and Judge. Nay which of these Parties can deny the others the Title of *Protestant* or convince them of *Heresy*, since *to be a Protestant, no more is required* (or if it be I would gladly know what it is) *then to admit of the Scriptures interpreted according to their best understandings and Consciences to be the sole and only rule of Faith and judge of controversies?* is not he that professeth to follow this principle, allowed by all to be a perfect good *Protestant*, though never so much differing in faith from others who make the same profession? Good God! hast thou told us that *Heresies must be*, and yet left us without all possibilities of convincing or condemning them, or knowing who are, and who are not *Heretickes*? But those who pretend this Rule and Judge to be *Scripture*, do in truth as little intend it as any who oppose them: for if they will please but to speak their consciences clearly, it would soon appear that it is not the Holy Scriptures which byas them, but their own *private reasons*, putting private sences and glosses upon those Scriptures, which were easily quitted, if they would once give themselves the liberty to see how easy it is for their reasons to erre in divine things, (which are as far above the reach of reason as Heaven is above the Earth) since the same reason doth mistake so much in humane affairs, as we see it to do, in our every dayes experience.

The *second* reason was that the *Letter* of Scriptures

ptures was to be construed and applyed by men, wherefore as mens Judgements and interest differ, so will their Expositions of written words; from hence differing sences will be raised, and from thence different faiths. For Example, If I were to dispute against an *Arrain*, and to prove that *God the Father, & God the Son are of the same substance*, I should urge that Text, John 10, 30. *I and my Father are one thing*. And by this, according to my judgement I should think I had proved the question. But then my *Arrian* comparing this with Joh. 17. 21. *Where Christ praieth to his Father, that his Disciples might all be one thing, as thou Father in me and I in thee*, concludes that this *One* or *One thing* in both these Texts are to be intended *One* in Affection, not in substance; for, (saith he) it can never be understood that Christ intended to pray that his Disciples might be *One* in substance. If I should urge the *Arrian* farther, and say that the Council of *Nice* gave the same interpretation which I do, to the Text which I urge, he would answer as Protestants generally do, that he hath a Worthy esteem of Councils and Fathers, so far as they agree with Scriptures, but he doth not think them infallible, he believes they may mistake, and therefore where he finds them disagreeing with the Word of God, he must contradict them all.

The *third* Reason which I thought forcible, was, that those who are thus far for the *sole Scriptures*, do not say that *One* or any particular number of the Books of Scriptures, but *All the works of Scripture*, which were written by Inspiration of God, do, being joyned together, make

up this Rule and Judge to be a compleat Rule and Judge. I concluded therefore, if any of these Books be now lost, this Rule is not perfect; and then Man is left by God without means to believe, consequently must be damned for that which is not his fault. Now that many of these books are lost, I found clear from the those which remain, there is mentioned Num. 21. v. 14. *The Book of the Warrs of the Lord.* This is lost. It is said of Solamon 1 Kings 4. 3. 2. *That he spoke three thousand Proverbs, and his Songs were a thousand and five.* I conceive some of these upon a just reckoning, will be observed to be wanting. We finde named 2 Chorn. 9. 29. *The book of Nathan the Prophet, the Prophecy of Ahijah, and the Visions of Iddo.* These are lost, as also those named 1 Chor. 29. 29. *The book of Samuel, the book of Nathan, the Book of Gad.* It is clear from *Mat.* 27. 9. That part of *Jeremy* is lost, for that Evangelist cites a Text of *Jeremy* not to be found in any of *Jeremies* books which we have. So also are the Books of that Prophet mentioned Mat. 2. 23. who foretold that Christ should be called a *Nazarene.* We shall find by 1 Cor. 5. 9. That the Epistle which our Canon calls St. *Paul's first Epistle* to the *Corinthians* was not truly his *first* to them, for there he said, *I wrote to you in an Epistle not to company with Fornicators*; wherefore if he had then written an Epistle to them, this was not his *first* to them. St. *Paul* wrote an Epistle from *Laodicea*, which he mentions thus, Col. 4. 16. *Read the Epistle from Laodicea.* It seems there was something in it which was material, yet we do not find that Epistle; the conclusion I think falls out very naturally.

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The *fourth* Reason was this, nothing can be a *sole sufficient* Rule to *all*, or the *only* way and means to convey Divine and infallible Faith to *all*, or a Judge to whose Sentence all are submit on pain of Damnation, which cannot be *certainly* and *truly* understood by *all*; But the *Scriptures* cannot be *certainly* understood by *all*. Nay they are very subject to be desparately misunderstood, if you believe the second Epistle of St. *Peter*, (and believe it we must for it is Gods Word) 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. where speaking of all St. *Pauls* Epistles in general, he saith, *In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest as they do also the other Scriptures unto their own destruction.* It is in vain to say, that *the Scriptures are easie in Fundamentals, and in what concerns our Salvation*, for we have here a testimony that they are hard, and wrested by the *unlearned* and *unstable* to their *destruction*, that it is their Damnation: Now if they were only hard in all things not appertaining to Salvation, the wresting of such things could not bring men to *Destruction*. It followes that they cannot be a safe and infallible secure, Rule, nor indeed any Rule at all to the *ignorant* who are infinitely the greater part of those for whom Christ dyed.

The *fifth* Reason is this, if the *Scriptures* that is the writtings of the *Prophets*, *Evangelists* and *Apostles*, &c. be this Rule and Judge, it can only be meant of their *true Authentical* and *Original* writings, not of *corrupted coppies*: Therefore if we have not their *true Originals*, our Rule is imperfect; Observe what the most Learned Protestant *Chamier* saith in this perticular of Scri-

pure Translations, *We acknowledge them to be made but by a private Spirit, as far as every mans judgement, skilfulness in Languages, diligence and sincerity were able to reach. Therefore there is none either in our own tongue or in any other, unto which we think meet to subject either our selves or other men. As for Translations, the sence of Protestants is this, that all of them, of what standing, name, or credit soever they be, and with what diligence, sincerity or Learning soever they were made, are only so far certain as they agree with the first Context, I mean as far as they express that sence which is certainly manifest* (and how shall that appear) *to be the sence of the Hebrew and Greek words* (he must intend here the true Originals) *but if they vary and swerve never so little from hence* (i. e. from the true Originals) *that sence which they give or express, we judge neither to be Divine nor Authentick, nor Canonical, but merely humane*, Cham. Panstr. Tom. 1. l. 1. c. 2. S. 5. So then we must have the *true Originals*, or we have no perfect Rule of the Scriptures, and therefore I would gladly see and speak with that man, who can assure me infallibly, that the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures which we have, are these *Originals*; Nay who will adventure to make *Oath*, that these which we have do agree with the *true Originals*? And yet if we could be secure of this, I doubt it will be hard to finde any person who doth so *infallibly* understand the *Originals*, as to give us a true *Translation*, on which we may with as much *infallible assurance* rely, as upon God interpreting: And yet if this cannot be had we must confess that we are not certain whether we have this Rule pure or not.

Sure

Sure I am the Apostles did not translate these books into *English*; we are so far from having St. *Matthews* Original, that we know not in what Language it was written, or whether he who translated it into *Greek* were an honest man or not; we all agree that our *English Translators* were *fallible* men, they might be mistaken, and have mistaken in multitudes of places; themselves say they were careful to get the best Copies of the Hebrew and Greek they could finde, but were not *infallibly* certain that those they had were true. Have we then in these a sufficient certainty to venture our Souls upon supposing God to have appointed the *Scriptures* as our *sole Rule*, *Guide*, and *Judge*? I think no man who hath any modesty, or any consideration of his Souls good, will say that we have: But sure I am, whoever shall dare to say it, will never be able to prove it *infallibly*. Give me leave to Expostulate thus with you, who are for *Sole Scripture*. What Scriptures would ye have me submit unto, who am a meer English man? If you say the *Originals*, neither you nor I know where to find them: If you say to such *Copies* as you have; I ask by what Authority do you require this? since they are but *Copies* of *Copies*, which you cannot certainly tell me that they are not corrupted, since the most Learned do affirm that there are variety of these Copies, in some of which whole Verses are omitted which are found in others: and that there are at least sixteen various Greek Copies of the New-Testament. If you tell me I must submit unto your *English Translations*, I ask farther, to which of them? for for they have differences also, the 9, and 18 Verses

See Jus Divinum Presbytery, p. 69. 70

ſes of the 7th. Chapter of *Daniel*, of the *Geneva* are, directly contrary to the ſame Verſes in the Tranſlation put forth by the command of King *Iames*. Nay the Miniſters of the County of *Lincon* in King *Iames* his time, in their grievances, delivered unto his Majeſty Pag. 11. 13. 14. do ſay that *the Engliſh Tranſlation of the Bible takes away from the Text, and adds to the Text, to the changing and obſcuring the very ſence and meaning of the Holy Ghoſt.* Our late great Linguiſt M. *Broughton* in his Advertiſements of Corruptions, affirms to the then Biſhops of England, *That their publick Tranſlations of Scripture into Engliſh is ſuch, as that it perverts the Text of the Old-Teſtament, in 848 places, and that it cauſeth millions of millions to reject the New-Teſtament, and to run into Eternal Flames.* And Dr. *Daniel Feately*, in his Treatiſe Entituled *The Dippers Dipped*, hath theſe words pag. 1. *No Tranſlation is ſimply Authentical, or the undoubted word of God. In the undoubted Word of God there can be no error, but in Tranſlations there are and may be errors. The Bibles Tranſlated therefore is not the undoubted word of God but ſo far only as it agreeth with the Orignal.* (b) I pray conſider how you will anſwer when thus preſſed? and how you will be able to ſatisfie me with certainty, that what you would have me rely upon, and ſubmit unto is the undoubted Word of God pure and uncorrupted? Who gave thoſe Copies or Tranſlations which you have, or any Copies or Tranſlations Authority to be a Ground of Faith to the World, whereby they might be ſaved by believing them

See *Anſwerths* Advertiſement the Reader in the end of his Anotations upon *Deute.* touching objections made againſt the Heb. *Text.*

(b) As touching the *Engliſh* Tranſlations and the Hebrew and Greek Copies which

them, or Damned for not believing them? And by what Rule shall I with certainty satisfie my self what Books those are which are the Word of God? for if that be not known, I see not but that it is as possible for me to have other Books imposed upon me, then what I have yet heard of or at least seen, as part of this Word of God as well as former Christians, some Ages after the Apostles times had the Epistle to the Hebrews; those of St. *James*, St. *Jude*, the latter of St. *Peter*, the second and third of St. *John*, with the Apocalips, or Revelation imposed upon them by Councils, where the Pope was chief? And, since *Divine* and *Infallible Faith* necessarily requires an *Infallible Ground*, who shall *rightly* and *infallibly* interpret these Scriptures which we have, and give us with *certainty* the *true* and *infallible* meaning of them, & of every thing therein contained, so as we may *safely* build our Faith thereon, without danger of *erring*, and of being Damned for misunderstanding them? *Lastly*, since, the ordinary and best means pretended by those who are for *sole Scripture*, for expounding of these Scriptures, are searching of Original Copies, conference of Places, parity of Reason, analogy of Faith, and the like; all which are dubious, uncertain and very *fallible*: how shall I be able *infallibly* to expound these Scriptures, since he that is wisest, will in all probability be far enough from giving sufficient ground of confidence whereon to depend *infallibly*, & ground our Faith with *certainty*, and find out the Truth without erring, amongst so many Figures, Tropes, improprieties of Speech, Mysteries, and difficulties as are to be found in Scriptures? These things are fit

are now extant amongst us. See *John Goodwin* his Treatise upon Divine Authority of Scripture asserted, from Page 4. unto pag. 19. &c.

fit to be clearly known, and that with certainty too before a man submit in so high a measure as you require.

The *sixth* Reason I met with was: whatsoever is a *sole sufficient* Rule must be *plain*, and *clear*, in all necessary points (at least) which relate unto *Faith*, or the means by which Salvation is to be had, which the Scripture is not; and above all things it must not contradict it self, which the Scripture seems to do; to prove these I shall give some few Instances, which I think can never be infringed.

That they are not plain and clear as is beforesaid, consider.

1 ALl Christians generally (except some few) do agree that the *Sacraments* of the Gospel are necessary in order to Salvation; now as to these, the Scriptures are so far from being clear, that they do not so much as determine what a Sacrament is, how many Christ ordained, or whether there be any Sacraments or not.

2. It is necessary to Salvation to believe *all* the Books of the Holy Scriptures to be the VWord of God, and to believe nothing written, to be the VWord of God, which is Apocryphal. But by the Scripture it cannot be made out plainly and clearly which Books are the *VWord of God*, and which are *Apocryphal*.

3. It is necessary to believe the Scriptures to be the *Word of God*; but there is no Text or Texts of Scripture

Scripture to prove that the Scriptures which we have, are Gods VVord.

4. It is neceſſary to know that the Scriptures are not corrupted, for if they are corrupted, they ceaſe to be the VVord of God, and then they cannot be any Rule or ſure guide unto us, But of this we can have no aſſurance in Scripture.

5. It is neceſſary in order to the knowing the true mind, meaning and VVill of God, and what he intended by ſuch a Text, that we know when a Text is to be underſtood literally, when figuratively, when miſtically; but this cannot be underſtood from ſole Scripture, as daily experience informs us.

6. It is neceſſary to know, that the very *Copies* and *Tranſlations* of the Scriptures which we have, and upon which we ground our ſelves, are *certainly true*; for if they are not, we build upon uncertainties; and conſequently have no ſure foundation for our Faith; yet we cannot be aſſured, nor have ſo much as any information as to this particular from the Scriptures.

7. It is neceſſary that the many manifeſt controverſies about the true ſence of Scripture ſhould be decided, becauſe where two contrary ſences are impoſed or urged, and both affirmed to be the meaning of God, and his Revelation, one only can be true, and he who refuſeth to believe that which is true, ſhall be damned; yet theſe controverſies cannot be decided by Scripture.

8. It is neceſſary to know what is purely and abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation to be believed, and what not, that is as you ſay, what is *fundamental*

mental and what *not fundamental*, and to be informed of this plainly, leſt we err and thereby be damned, but in this the Scripture is ſilent.

9. It is neceſſary to believe that *God the Father is not begotten; that God the Son is not made, but begotten, by his Father only; That God the Holy Ghoſt is neither made, nor begotten, but doth proceed; and that from the Father and the Son; That Chriſt is of one ſubſtance with the Father*, and that theſe *Three* are *One*, and that *One Three*: I refer to conſideration whether all theſe points be plainly and clearly to be found in Scripture, if they were it had been almoſt impoſſible, for ſo many diviſions to have hapned about them, as have done amongſt perſons on all ſides, admitting the Scriptures to be the VVord of God.

10. It is neceſſary (the Church of *England* ſaith) that *Infants ſhould be Baptiſed*, that *Women ſhould receive the Holy Sacrament of the Euchariſt*, that *Chriſtians ſhould obſerve the Lords day*, yet none of theſe points are clearly or perticularly proved by Scriptures.

11. It is a ſin, and as the generality of Chriſtians agree) an Hereſy *to Re-baptiſe any one who hath been Baptiſed by an Heretick*, where doth the Scripture ſay ſo?

That

That there are in the Scriptures several places which to common Reason seem Contradictions, and consequently some part of Scriptures seem untrue, is easily proved; and I shall here give you some few plain Instances for Example, to which many more might be added.

1. IN the 2 *Kings* C.8. *v.*26. You read thus, *Two and twenty years old was* Ahazia *when he began to Reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem, and his Mothers name was* Athaliah *the Daughter of* Omri. But 2 Chron. *c.*22. *v.* 2. You will read thus, *Forty and two years old was* Ahazia *when he began to Reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem, his Mothers name was* Athaliah *the Daughter of* Omri. Now against the infallibility of Scripture, *Reason* conceiveth her self to have this infallible demonstration, *viz.* no one who speaketh two things, the one contrary to the other, can be said to be *infallible* in speaking; but to affirm of the same person that *he began to Reign when he was two and twenty years old*, and that *he was two and forty years old when he began to Reign*; is to speak two things the one contrary to the other, therefore saith *Reason* the Scripture is not *infallible* in speaking.

2. In St. *Matthews* Gospel, Chap. 1. *v.*17. you read thus, *All the generations from* Abraham *to* David *are fourteen generations, and from* David *till the carrying away into* Babylon *are fourteen genera-*

generations, and from the carrying away into Babylon *unto Christ are fourteen generations*; Now if you please to consider that three fourteens must make *forty and two*, and then please to reckon up all the persons named, you shall finde them demonstrably to be but *one and forty* and no more, which is but *two fourteens* and *one thirteen*. Now *Reason* asketh whether this can be *infallibly* true?

3. In St. *Lukes* Gospel, Chap. 3. *v.* 35. 36. you shall read thus, *Salah, was the Son of* Cainan *which* (Cainan) *was the Son of* Arphaxad, and if you read *Gen. c.* 11. 12. you shall not find that *Cainan* was the Son of *Arphaxad* as St. *Luke* saith, but that *Arphaxad lived five and thirty years and begat* Salah. Now according to St. *Luke* this *Salah* was the son of *Cainan* not of *Arphaxad*. If it be answered that *Salah* was *Arphaxads* son because *Arphaxad* was his Grand-father: I pray observe that *Arphaxad* is said to have *begotten* him, and that when he was *five and thirty years old*. And if you remark that Chapter in *Genesis*, no one is said to have had a son before he was thirty years old: But the greatest difficulty will be here, It is said *Arphaxad lived five and thirty years and begat Cainan*. If then *Arphaxad* was Grand-father to *Salah*, because he begat *Cainan*, when he was five and thirty years old (in which year of his age he begat *Salah*) then *Salah* his Grand-child & *Cainan* his son must be both born in the same year, which saith *Reason* is impossible. Now if Scripture can determine all controversies, I hope you will shew me how to solve these difficulties, by the *Scripture*; which how to do I professe most seriously I do not understand.

The

The *seventh* Reason which I found against this Opinion of *sole Scripture* was, that the Scriptures had been appointed by God for this end of being our *sole* Rule, Guide and Judge, in all our doubts, and the *sole* means to bring Faith unto our Souls, they would have been so in the Apostles times (at least) after all the Books of the New-Testament were written; but that they were so we do not find, for then the Authority of the *Apostles* must have ceased, so soon as they had made an end of Writing, which I believe no one will say, much less prove: And then even in the times of the Apostles, if a controversie had arisen touching the *true sence* of any Text, no address should have been to the *Apostles* to decide the doubt, but to the book which every one must have judged, though in opposition to the then present interpretation of the *Apostles*, if they had then taken upon them to explain their own Writings, which to say, I think will appear sufficiently absurd to all men. Nay if the Scriptures had been intended for this, it must have followed in all probability, that *our Lord Christ* would have left his own Law and Doctrines in writing under his own hand, which he hath not done: at least he would have obliged *all the Apostles* to write, which he did not that we know of; It should also follow, that *to write had been the chief part of the Apostles Ministry* consequently *that most part of the Apostles neglected to perform the chiefest part of their Ministry, and were negligent to do that which above all things was their duty*, will any of you presume to affirm this? yet if you speak consequently, it will be hard to avoid it.

The

The *last* Reason which I shall recount unto you is this, that to make the Scripture this *sole Rule* and *Judge*, is in effect not to make the Scripture so, but to make every individual man and woman, who take upon them to read and understand the Scriptures, *such a Rule* and *Judge* unto themselves; for what difference is there between *judging by my own Reason* and *judging by a Law to be Interpreted by my own Reason?* This is to make the Scripture not Gods Word, but the word of every private man. Consider the consequences of this, and see if they are not as dangerous, and as destructive of all Governments and humane Societies as those which follow from setting up the *Private Spirit*, to be this *Rule* and *Judge*. Did not *Calvin* the first Presbyterian pretend a *Ground* from *Scripture* interpreted by himself, to Rebel against and depose his lawful Prince the Bishop of *Geneva?* Did not *Luther* pretend *Warrant* from *Scripture*, to make those disturbances which he occasioned in *Germany*, against the Legal Authorities of that Country? Did not the late Presbyterians *Knox* and *Buchanan* in *Scotland*, & their Abettors profess *Authorities* from *Scripture*, to depose and expel *Queen Mary* (that most excellent, most innocent, most religious, and most Vertuous *Great Grand-mother* of our *present King*) from her Crown and Kingdom? Did not the *Calvenists* of *France*, and of the *Low Countries*, the old and modern *Waldenses*, and *Albigences*, and *John* of *Leyden* with his *Anabaptists* in *Munster*, all of them pretend *Warrants* of *Scripture*, to rebel against their several Lords and Princes? Did not here in *England* our Ministers of the *Presbytery* first, and o r several

Teachers

Teachers of the several *Congregational Sects*, perſwade us by Arguments drawn from *Scriptures* interpreted by themſelves, to take up Armes and Rebel againſt our *late Soveraign*, on the behalf of a pretended *Godly Parliament*? How many Noblemens and Gentlemens Sons were prevailed with by thoſe pretences of *walking cloſe with God*, in obſerving *Sabaths* and *Faſts* according to the *Scriptures*, to leave their Trades and Maſters with whom their Parents had placed them, as *Apprentices* in *London* and elſewhere, and to draw their Swords againſt their Prince and Parents? Did not the ſame *Teachers* upon pretended *Scripture-grounds* draw us to commit one *Perjury* upon another? firſt, to violate our Oaths of *Allegiance* and *Supremacy*, which they alſo broak without ſcruple, (as they did their Oaths of Canonical obedience) then to violate the *Covenant* which they perſwaded us to take? Were not the *Murther of our Prince* all thoſe *Treaſons*, *Rapines*, *Sacreledges* and Miſchiefs, of which our eyes have been witneſſes, all committed upon pretence of *obeying the Scriptures*, of pulling down *Antichriſt*, and ſetting up a *Goſpel worſhip Miniſtry* and *Diſcipline*? What drove *Venner* and his complices to fight for *King Jeſus* againſt *Heaven*, and our preſent *Soveraign*, but *Scripture* interpreted by himſelf? And what puts the preſent *Calveniſts* of *Hungary* and *Tranſilvania* to abet the *Turks*, and foreſake the *Chriſtians* and their lawful Princes, but their own miſinterpreting of *Scriptures*, alledging that it is for the pulling down of the *Pope*, whom they have been taught by their Miniſters to call Antichriſt? In fine, I leave it to be conſidered whether to follow your own

 private

private sence and interpretations of Scripture, but not the same thing as to pretend to be guided by the Private Spirit, from whence it will follow that you have no proof but your own affirmations, that you do not believe God, but your own selves only; And that in a sence of Scripture, against the received sence Interpretation, Tradition and Authority of more then one thousand five hundred years; and against that Text of 2 Pet. 1. 20. *No Prophesie of Scripture is of Private Interpretation:* And that no one can be an Heretick, because you have neither Reason nor Evidence, Testimony of Witnesses or Authority to convince him, that your interpretation is true, consequently, he cannot be said to be obstinate, who opposeth your interpretation, consequently, he cannot be an Heretick because not obstinate. Hence I conclude, that if *Christ* be *God*, as *certainly* and *infallibly* he is, and if he truly loved those souls for which he dyed, he hath certainly provided for them some more assured means by which to know the true Faith, without which he will not save them, then by leaving them, to the *Scriptures* to be interpreted by each one as he thinks best; for what Law-maker was there ever found so rediculous, as to gather a people into a body, and give them a Law-book in writing to govern them, and to be their *only* judge in all their differences, without appointing, nay expresly prohibiting, that there should be any *living Judge* or *Judges*, or any *Court* to expound this Law, and to have the Executive Authority and jurisdiction, from whence there should be no appeal?

Having considered after this manner what could be

be said, for the *Private Spirit*, *Reason*, and the *sole sufficiency of Scripture*, I was in the last place to see what could be said on the behalf of the *Catholick Church*, resolving from these premises, that if here I could not find a satisfaction in point of *certainty*, and an *infallible assurance*, I was not to expect it, (as far as I yet understood) from the Principles of *Christianity* and consequently must conclude, that *Religion*, and *Faith*, were no more then *Fancy* and *Opinion*.

I thought it not unreasonable, and other persons would doubtless have thought the Argument strong enough, if I had sought no further, but concluded, the *Private Spirit* is not, *Reason* is not, the *Scriptures* are not this Rule and Judge; therefore the *Church* is. But I resolved to examine farther, and having agreed the point that *such a Rule and Judge there must alwaies be of necessity*, and therefore there hath alwaies been, and ever shall be such a One, unless we shall say (which I hope none will) that God is defective in necessaries, I found:

First, for the first two thousand years, before any Scriptures were written, the Church of God was this Rule and Judge: Was not Circumcision and other Rights brought in by *Abraham*, and practised by the Church then without any Scripture to try them by; what would you have said if you had then lived? would you have disobeyed the then Church and rejected those Ordinances because there were then no Scriptures to warrant them?

Secondly, the Church of the Jews was so to the Jews after that the Scripture was written; and this by the express direction of Scripture,

Deut. 17. 8. *Thou shalt come to the Priests, the Levites, and unto the Iudge, that shall be in those daies, and enquire, and they shall shew thee the sentence of Iudgement, &c. And according to the iudgement which they shall tell thee, you shall do: Thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left hand, And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the Priest or unto the Iudge, even that man shall dye.* Therefore our Blessed Lord, whilst the Jewish Church was yet in being, gave directions, Mat. 23, 2. 3. *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Chair, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe that observe and do.* Would God direct them unto, and punish with Death for not obeying an *Authority*; which might deceive them, would our Lord command the doing of whatsoever should be done by an Authority when that Authority was capable of mistaking? *Moses* had left them a *compleat Canon* of *Scripture*, but delivered it not to the *People*, nor took he any care to have it translated for perticular Persons, or Families, or Trybes; nor could sufficient Copies have been made in any reasonable time without Miracle, nor do we find any such were made: The *Church* therefore, and not *those Scriptures*, was the *Rule* and *Iudge* to them; they were to hearken to the *Priest* and *Iudge* upon pain of Death. *Circumcision* was forborne for above forty years, and afterwards renewed again at the command of God by the mouth of *Ioshua*, *Ios.* 5. 2. did they examine whether any such precept was to be found in the *Scriptures* before they complied with this command? Was not the *Government* changed 1. *Sam.* 8? VVas not a

new

new Temple after a *new method* built by *Solomon* at the command of God 2 *Sam.*7.13. 1 *Kings* 5. 5. 1 *Chron.* 21.8,9,10? VVere not several *new Feasts* appointed to be observed upon pain of Sin? several *Kings Families* deposed? several *new Families* exalted to the Crown? several persons put to death, and other extraordinary actions done, and commands given by Gods directions by the mouths of several particular Prophets? were not all these things submitted unto, received and obeyed as the *infallible* directions of God, without any enquiry whether the *Scriptures* which they then had, did allow of such proceedings? Did not that People believe *the Resurrection* without any *Scripture* teaching them at that time? Did not they receive several *new books of Scripture*, as the *infallible* VVord of God, without searching for any warrant for the same in the Scriptures they then had? yet all those *new Scriptures* had been unnecessary, if those delivered by *Moses* had been sufficient. Nay tell me, who had the *infallible* Authority of interpreting and expounding those Scriptures which they had? was it in the *people*, or in the *spirits* of the people, or was it in the *Church*? From hence I concluded, that it was possible for the *Church* of God to be such a *Rule* and *Judge*, and to be the means appointed by God, to give *infallible* instructions in the Truth. Now as concerning the Church in the new Law under Christ I found.

Thirdly, that God had promised *such a Church* such an Authority by the mouthes of his Prophets, Isa. 2. v, 2,3, &c. *It shall come to pass in the last daies* (so the Apostles called the time of

the New Law) *That the Mountain of the Lords House shall be Established in the top of the mountains,* (behold its Visibility) *All Nations shall flow unto it,* (See its Universality and Extent.) *And say, come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of* Jacob: *And He* (that is God) *will teach us His Waies,* (in this His House or Church) *For out of* Sion *shall go forth the Law,* (as by the Apostles on Whitsunday) *and the Word of God from* Jerusalem (where the first Preaching of the Gospel begun) *And He shall Judge amongst the Nations* (Not personally, for Christ never yet out of *Jewry*, but) by his *Churches Tribunal*, Erected amongst all Nations so conspicuously, that they may all flow to it. Will any one say this Judgement, which is Gods Judgement, can be *Fallible*? Or that in this Tribunal, he that teacheth, can teach us Errors? *Isa.* 35. 8. Where God promiseth to Establish a way of Holiness so direct unto us, *That Fooles should not erre therein*, Isa. 54. 3, 13, 17. *Thy seed shall Inherit the Gentiles, thy Children shall be taught of the Lord, and every Tongue that shall rise against thee in Judgement, thou shalt condemne.* Isa. 56. 21. *As for me, this is my Covenant with them saith the Lord, my Spirit* (Infallible) *that is upon thee and my words* (Infallible also) *which I have put in thy mouth* (the mouth by which the *Church* teacheth and judgeth) *shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy Seeds Seed saith the Lord from henceforth and for ever.* Behold here the *Spirit of Truth*, Intailed upon the *Church* to preserve it from Error, Isa. 60. 10. 12, &c. *The Sons of strangers shall build up thy Walls, their Kings shall minister unto*

thee

thee, thy Gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the Forces of the Gentiles, and that their Kings may be brought. For the Nation and Kingdome which will not serve thee, (by submitting to thy Doctrine) shall perish, I will make the place of my Feet glorious, they shall call thee the City of the Lord, I will make thee an eternal Excellency, thy Sun shall no more go down, nor shall thy Moon withdraw it self, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light. If those shall perish who refuse to submit to this Authority, to whom *God is an Everlasting Light*, and whom he makes an *Everlasting Excellency*, we need not fear that it can deceive us, or that it can ever so be Eclipsed, as to be at any time *Invisible*. Many more promises might be Collected out of the Old Testament, but I come to shew.

Fourthly, that *Christ* by his own mouth, and by the mouthes of his *Apostles* hath promised to us likewise such a Church, Mat. 16. 19. *Upon this Rock I will build my Church*, (which he had foretold by his Prophets should be of so vast extent) *And the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*, Mat. 18. 17. *He that will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen or a Publican*, but if Christ by his spirit doth not preserve *this Church* from all possibility of teaching me error instead of a Truth, I may from *this Church* which Christ obligeth me to hear, and unto which he obligeth me to submit, receive such errors as may damn me. Mat. 28. 20. *And Loe I am with you alwaies even unto the end of the World*, this must be meant of the *Visible Church* which was to be in every Age, for the Apostles were not to

live and to Baptise and Teach *alway unto the end of the world.* And therefore if the same assistance and presence of Christ was promised to the *Church* after the *Apostles*, I think we shall not doubt but that it is the *same* that is *Infallible.* But that it may clearly appear, that the Assistance promised by Christ to his *Church* extended to an *Infallible* security from *all errors*, Consider *John* 14. 16. *I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive*, and ver. 26. *The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I shall say unto you*, and Chap. 16. 12. *I have many things yet to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now, howbeit when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.* But *all Truth* excludeth *all Errors*, and this *for ever* which was longer then the *Apostles* were to live: If we therefore enquire, by what means this teaching shall be, by whom the people shall be taught *all Truths*? and how preserved from *All errors*? St. *Paul* will tell us, Eph. 4. 11. *He gave some Apostles* (succeeding in full Apostolical Authority) *some Prophets* (expounders of the Prophets) *some Evangelists* (Preachers of the Gospel) *some Pastors and Teachers*: to what end? *For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* For what time? *Till we all come in the Union of the Faith.* But will these secure us? the next verse will tell you, *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine by*

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the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lye in waite to deceive. Gods intent then was, to provide such means for mankind, as might *secure* them in their beleif in *every Age*, that they might not be deceived by the *cunning craft* of false Teachers, such as now think themselves able, by pretending *Inward Lights, Private Spirits, and evidence of Scripture by themselves Interpreted*, to teach us a doctrine contrary to all those, holy Saints who for fifteen Ages before them have been (and none others, teaching a contrary Faith can be named, who have been) the *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors* and *Teachers*, in the *Visible Church* of Christ. In the last place I shall urge that Text of St. Paul to *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. *The Church of the living God, the Pillar and ground of Truth.* And may we not securely rely upon *that Pillar*, which God hath erected for us? and found our Faith upon that *ground of truth*, which the God of all truth hath given us for that end?

To elude these plain and evident Texts, I know you are wont to say, in the first place, that they may have other Interpretations, and therefore this is not the Truth. But will not the same reason hold, the Apostles cited many Texts of Scriptures, and interpreted them so as to prove Christ the *Messias*; and his Doctrines to be true, whereas those Texts might have had other interpretations; Therefore the Interpretations put on them by the *Apostles* were not true? Who sees not the weakness of this Argument? Can you shew with any *assurance*, that these Texts are not capable of these Interpretations? If not, then according to your own principles these Interpretations may be true, for you who say the contrary

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are not *infallible*, but may be mistaken.

Another answer which you use to give is, that you are willing to agree, that so long as the *Church* of Christ teacheth conformable to *scripture*, she is *infallible*, and so long as she doth her *Duty* she may and ought to be beleived. But this is as weak as the former; For who sees not, that it gives the *Church* no more *Privelodge*, nor allowes it to have any more benefit from these *promises* then the Devil hath? For so long as he teacheth conformable to Scripture he may be beleived. A straw may be a Pillar until it bends, and Quick-sands sure *ground* until they yeild. What assurance can we have that the Holy Apostles did their Duty in writing what the *Holy Ghost* did dictate unto them? For if they did not, their writings are not to be beleived; consequently we are not, nor can we be *infallibly* secure that the Scriptures which we have were dictated by, and are by Inspiration from *God*: If you can answer this, so as to be secure that the *Apostles* did their Duty, the same will be our answer, that the present *Visible Catholick Church* of Christ at all times doth her Duty.

The *fifth* Argument is; that the *Church* of God was this *Rule* and *Judge*, this *only means* to convey Faith, and this *infallible Guide* and *Authority* when our *Blessed Saviour* was alive, and before the New-Testament was written, and also in the *Apostles* times both before and after the whole *New-Testament* was written. If not I obliege you to shew some evident Text which proves certainly, that after the *New-Testament* was written, the *Church* in the *Apostles* time was deprived of this *priviledge* and *Authority*, and that

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it had been no sin, then to oppose, or not submit to the Guidance, Direction, Government and Authority of the Apostles. That *Luke* 10. 16. *He that hears you hears me*; was only intended until the Canon should be compleat. That Mat. 28. v. 19, 20. *Go teach all Nations*, and *Lo I am with you alway*, was only to be until they had done writing. That the promises before mentioned, of sending the *Comforter to teach them all Truth*, consequently to make them able to teach the World *all Truth*, were to be of force *only* until the Scriptures were finished. That 1 *Tim.* 3. 15, did only intend that the Church should be *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*, until the Scriptures were compleated; and should afterwards have no greater priviledge or office, then barely to be a *Library-keeper*, and have the *custody* of the Apostles Writings. You will likewise be obliged to shew and prove, at what perticular time the Apostles were to be deprived of this great priviledge, *viz.* whether just at the instant that the last words of the Scriptures were written, or not until they (*i. e.* the whole Scriptures) were promulgated unto the whole Church, or to some part of it, and to what part? for it was necessary that the Church should be this *Rule* and *Judge* until the Canon was compleated, because otherwise there had been no *infallible Guide* or *Authority* to convey Faith unto the World; it was as necessary the *Church* should be so until the whole Canon was received by all the Church, in all places, and that all Christians were *infallibly* assured that they had the whole Canon, which was then after for ever to be their *sole Guide* and *Judge*: for until the *whole Church*

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in all parts hath this assurance, the Scriptures to those that wanted this assurance could be no *Rule, Guide* or *Judge*; consequently, those who wanted such assurance had no *infallible Faith*, nor any *certain* means to know what to believe. But if notwithstanding all this you shall (without giving any Reason) still insist that the *Apostles* were this *infallible Rule* and *Judge*, in their times *only*, until the *Canon* of Scriptures was finished, and then lost their Authority when they had compleated the *Canon*. I pray consider what will be the consequence in case it stands proved that the *Canon* of Scripture which they finished, is now uncompleated by the loss of those Epistles and parcels of the Apostles writings which I have proved to be lost? Will it not follow, that for the same Reason that an *infallible* living Rule and Judge was necessary before the *Canon* was compleat, the same is now necessary some part of the *Canon* being lost? And what will the consequence be if it stand proved also that supposing the *Canon* were compleat, yet it is not sufficient to decide the controvesies now on foot amongst Christians in matters of Faith? Will it not follow that then it is necessary to have *such* a *Rule* and *Judge* as is before mentioned? The late Learned Dr. *Ferne* a great Champion for sole Scripture, confesseth Sect. 27. That *Indeed such a Judge or Umpire in Christendome would (if to be had) be a ready means to compose all differences and to restore truth and peace.* But shall we think that our Blessed *Redeemer* when he first founded his *Holy Church* did not see this as clearly as Dr. *Ferne*? certainly he did, and for this reason he appointed the *Holy Apostles* and their *Successors*

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to be *this Iudge* and *Umpire*, and if you desire or expect to see an end of those differences wherein ye are now involved, by relying on your own private Interpretations of the Scriptures, you must addresse your selves to this *Iudge* and be content to stand unto the determination of this Umpire which is *infallible*; I say *infallible*, for as the *Apostles* though *as men* were subject to error in their own private affairs, and actions, and as such might one withstand the other and reprove the other, yet were they by the assistance of Gods Holy Spirit *infallible* in defining and delivering matters of *Faith*; so the Prelates of the Holy Catholick Church though *as men* they are *fallible* in their own private actions and affairs, yet when assembled in a *General Council* with their *Supream Pastor*, they are still made *infallible* in defining matters of *Faith* by the assistance of the *same* Holy Ghost who was as well promised to them as to the Apostles.

The last Reason is, that none of the difficulties that were proposed to prove the Scriptures not to be the *Rule* and *Iudge* before mentioned, are capable of being objected against the *Church*. For *first*, this *Iudge* and *Rule* is capable of answering the end for which it is appointed and proposed, all who submit unto the *Church* agreeing in matters of Faith: *Secondly*, it is not capable of being misunderstood or misinterrupted by the various Reasons, Judgements and Interests of men; but is alwaies in being, and capable upon demand to explain and declare its own sence, and intention upon any difference arising. *Thirdly*, it is capable of being understood by *All*. *Fourthly*, it is capable of being certainly know by *All*.

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Fifthly, it is capable of determining with plainess and clearness in every Article of Faith, and hath alwaies appeared to do so, to the condemnation and confusion of all opposers. *Sixthly*, this was the said *Rule* and *Judge* in *Christ*'s time, and in the times of the *Apostles*. Lastly, this doth not set up every individual man and woman to be a *Judge* and *Rule* unto themselves, but preserves *the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*; by teaching *All* understandings to become *Captives* to this *Rule* and *Judge* appointed by God, for their guidance and direction.

But I know there will be yet an Objection made by you of the seperation, whether *any* Texts of the Holy Scriptures, and consequently whether these Texts which speak so amply of the *Church*, are to be understood of the *Church Militant* and *visible* in this World? or of the *Church Triumphant*? For certainly did you apprehend that God had a *Church* in this World, that is *a visible* body politique distinct from that *invisible Church*, which is Christs *Mistical* body *Triumphant*, you would not (as I in charity believe) divide your selves into so many Congregations, independent of each other or any other body or Government whatsoever in relation to Religion. Now to satisfie you in this I shall desire you to consider, *Acts* the 20.28. Where the Text speaks of a *Church* governed by High Pastors which can only be meant of the Visible Church, and that of *the whole Flock*, or Church *which Christ Redeemed with his Blood*, *which* cannot be meant of any particular Congregational Church 1 Corinthians 10. 32. *Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles*

tiles, nor to the Church of God even as I please all men in all things, where he speaks clearly of the *sole* and *entire* visible Church, 1 Cor. 12. 28. where mention is made of the *Governours* and Priests which are extended throughout the *whole* Visible *Church* only. *God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondly Prophets, &c.* and *Ephes.* 4. 11. before cited: *Col.* 1. 24. 25. Where *Church* is taken for the *militant* only, for St. *Paul* was not *made a minister* of the *Church Triumphant*, 1 Tim. 2. 15. before cited, must signifie the sole and whole Visible Church; for no particular Church can be stiled *the pillar and ground of Truth*, since they may fall, and often have fallen from Truth, *Iam.* 5. 14. Where he speaks in general to *All* beleiving Christians, and of a *Church* using *visible* Ceremonies, and *Priests* or *Elders*, which is not the *Church Triumphant*, Mat. 16. 18. Where the *Church* of Christ is to be built upon *Peter*, and therefore must be meant of the *Visible* Church *Militant*; for it is built, whilst *militant*, and transferred when it is *Triumphant*. Not can this be any other then a *Visible Church* founded upon a *Visible Rock* or Foundation: for that *Rock* there spoken of is not Christ, but St. *Peter*, as the words clearly signifie, for our Saviour saies upon *this Rock* I will build my Church, immediately after he had named St. *Peter*, where as if he had meant *Himself*, or St. *Peters* Confession of his being the *Son of the everliving God*, this being the remote or mediate antecedent, he should have said according to Grammer and true Construction *and upon that Rock*, Besides he saies, *I will build my Church*, whereas if by *Rock* he had intended himself, or St. *Peters* aforesaid *Confessi-*

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on, he would have said, *Upon this Rock I have built* or *I do build my Church*, not *I will build*: For when our Lord spoke these words, his *Church* was then actually built upon him, and upon his being the Son of the Living God. He spoke then therefore what he intended to do, and of what was to be after his Resurrection and Ascention into Heaven, and promiseth here that for those future times his *Visible Church* should be built upon St. *Peter*. *Lastly*, that I may speak not as to the word only, but as to the thing it self. *viz.* The Divine Constitution of the *Catholick Visible Church*, by the Ordinance of our *Dearest Saviour*. Consider, 1 *Cor.* 12. where it is at large described by the Holy Apostle to be *One body* with different parts fitly disposed, ordered and connected together in one and the same body, Whereof *One*, he saith is the Head, and that must be as *visible* as the rest of the Body, (for a *visible body* without a *visible Head* would be a *Monster*) and such a *visible Head* as stands in need of the *Foot*, which *Christ* cannot do being *God*, and so wanting nothing. And this the Apostle applies to the *Apostolical Church* in his time; and the same is also described again, *Ephe.* 4. from v. 4. to the 17. But I suppose you will be asking, Is not then *Christ* the *Head* of his *Church*? Can the *Church* have another *Head* besides *Christ*? I answer *Christ* is the Head of his *Church* and yet the *Church* of *Christ* by his appointment may have in its *External Government* another *Head*, that is an *external Head*, by the appointment of *Christ*. I say *Christ* is the only absolute *Independent Head*, but he may appoint a *Dependent Head* derived from him. *Christ*

is the sole *Head* that Governs *All*, both *Pastors* and *People*, and the *chief Pastor* also. Thus God is the *King* of the World; may not he therefore have *other Kings* Reigning under him? Now how opposite and contrary your *Congregational Churches*, and *all Churches* divided from the true *Visible Church* are to this constitution, is easie for you to see? What are those *Congregational Churches* but a confused Rabble of *Itching Ears*, *heaping up Teachers to themselves*, without any either *single Person*, or *Assembly* of them endowed with power to govern, or direct all of their Congregations dispersed in divers Provinces and Counties? but every one stands upon its own bottome, and hath no dependence of the rest, as do the Common-Wealths of *Venice*, *Genova*, *Holland*, *&c.* so that they have no *visible Unity* amongst them, either of *Co-ordination* or *Subordination*, but are politick Bodies, wholly seperate and disjoyned the one from the other. Can you think this the constitution of Christs *visible Church* on earth? Is this *One Body*? Is this a *compaction* and *conjunction* by *Joynts* and *Nerves*, mentioned by the Apostles? The first and Original *Christian Church* in our Saviours time was such an united Body, as St. *Paul* mentions, having then *our Saviour* for its *visible Head*, and his *Disciples* for its *Members*, all united together in one *visible Communion*; and was not this *Original Church* the Modal and Platform laid by our Saviour to be imitated and followed in its manner of Government by all succeeding Ages? the *Apostolical Church* next to that of our Saviours time, was like unto it, where St. *Peter* was the *chief Pastor*, and the *Apostles*

under him, over the *whole Church* disperſed both amongſt *Iews* and *Gentiles*, as appears *Acts* 15. And who had power to change this *Original* and *Apoſtolical* manner of Union and Government in after Ages into a quite oppoſite digeſtion, and to bring it into a perfect Anarchie.

I hope from the grounds here laid, it will appear as clear to you as I profeſs it did to me, that the *viſible Church* of God on Earth which in the *Creed* is called the *Holy Catholick Church*, was and is that *Rule* and *Iudge*, that *means* appointed by God, for the conveying of the *Chriſtian Faith* to the World; and to whom all on pain of *Damnation*, were and are by Gods Ordinance to ſubmit, as to the *Authority* appointed by *God* to teach them what they ought to believe in order to the attaining of Salvation; and that without diſputing any more then they would have diſputed the Decrees and directions of the *Holy Apoſtles*, were they now living upon Earth, conſequently that *this Authority* was *infallible*.

If againſt theſe Arguments which I here urge, any of you ſhall ſay, that Catholicks diſcourſing thus, and propoſing to prove their *Church* and its *Infallibility* from the *Scriptures*, do fall into a Circle, and prove their *Church* from the *Scriptures*, and the *Scriptures* by their *Church*; I anſwer with the Learned Authour of *Infidelity Unmasked*, that our taking this Method, is not forced upon us by neceſſity, but by your *Incredulity*: With different perſons we muſt proceed different waies, to you who deny the *Infallibility* of the Holy Catholick Church, and yet pretend

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to believe the *Scriptures* to be the Word of God, we prove the *Infallibility* of the Church of God, by the very *Scriptures* which you pretend to admit. Thus our Blessed Saviour to the Jews who denyed to believe his *Infallibility*, and yet admitted the *Scriptures* to be the Word of God, made use of Arguments drawn from the *Scriptures* which they admitted, for the proof of his *Infallibility* Joh. 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures* or *ye do Search the Scriptures they are they which testifie of me*; so the Apostles at several times in the *Acts* are found to have urged *Scripture*-arguments, for proving their Master to have been the *Messias*, to those who admitted the *Scriptures* to be the Word of God, but would not believe their Doctrines; not that this was necessary in it self, but only by reason of their *incredulity* it was fit to proceed thus: Will you therefore say that *Christ* and his *Apostles* arguing in this manner to such persons, fell into a Circle, when to the Gentiles they proposed these very Scriptures, as the Word of God, upon their own Authority? But when we proceed most properly, the *Church* as well as Her *Supream Independent Master*, is proved independently of the *Scriptures*, which we receive from the *Church*; the *Church* had its Being before the *Scriptures*, (as you must grant) and you cannot deny, but that even before the *Scriptures* were written, there wanted not means to find and know the *Church* with *certainty*; for none could have believed the *Scriptures* to be *infallible*, unless they had first believed the Writers of them to be *infallible*, and many were converted to the True *Church*, before it was possible for them to believe the *Scriptures*, which were not

then in Being. When therefore we generally go about to prove the Churches *infallibility*, we do it by shewing and manifesting the *Miracles, sanctity of Life, efficacy of Doctrine, admirable repentance of Sinners, conversion of all sorts of Persons and Countries, Unity, Stability, Perpetuity, constant Visibility, Succession*, and the Name *Catholick*, which is and are found in her, and by such Marks and Signs as are impossible for God to affix into a Lye; and whensoever you go about to destroy the Efficacie of these Arguments, you do at the same time impugne the *Infallibility* of the Apostles, and endeavour to prove, that Infidels converted by them to *Christianity* by vertue of such Arguments, were rather *deluded* then *converted*. But if from such Arguments it followed, that the Apostles were *infallible*, and their Doctrine intirely true, and in no part either false or uncertain, it being impossible that God should lye, confer his Hand and Seal to the confirmation of a false-hood, or of such a doctrine as was partly true, and partly false; the same Arguments independent of *Scripture*, will be convincing to prove the *Catholick Church* to be *infallible*.

From all that hath been hitherto said, I hope you will not hereafter think a *Catholick* ridiculous, when he professeth to *believe, as the Church of God believeth*: Would it have been foolish in one who had lived in the times of Christ or the Apostles, to say, *I believe as Christ commands or teacheth me to live?* or *I believe as the Apostles believe?* If not, why should it now seem strange to say, *we believe as the Catholick Church* (whom we profess in our Creed to believe:) *believeth?*

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Since we esteem this present Church of our Age to have the *Spirit of God* directing her, and to be *infallible*: but certainly this is a most safe profession, by which we profess in few words, to believe all truths; inasmuch as the *Church* hath the *Spirit of God* residing in her to *teach her all Truths*. And if one may safely say (as who dares deny it) *I believe all things contained in the Scriptures*, although he doth not explicitely know the moyety of the particular things therein contained? Why may we not safely (supposing the Church to be infallible in matters of Faith) profess *to believe all things which the Church believeth and teacheth in matters of Faith*, who believeth and teacheth not only the Scriptures, and what are therein contained, but also all other the Doctrines of Christianity, which are not in the Scriptures particularly contained? Especially if the Catholick Church be (as I have proved) this *Guide* and *Judge*, to whose Authority and Judgement the whole World is obliged to submit in matters of Faith, upon pain of Damnation? Indeed, if one of you should profess to believe, as that *little private Congregation* of which he calls himself a Member doth believe; it would seem ridiculous, because himself holdeth that *Congregation* to be *fallible*, and he cannot tell the belief of it; possibly (though not probably) he may imagine what it doth not believe, its *Creed* consisting most of *Negatives*, and its humour being better skilled in determining what it would not have, then what it would have; but to say with *certainty* what it doth now believe, or how long it will hold its present Faith, or continue to be a *Congregation*? he is not able to foresee. It

is not thus with the *Holy Catholick Church*, therefore to profess to believe, as the Church of God (which is *infallible*) believeth, is safe and prudent, and in effect no more then to profess to be a *Christian*, or to believe the Doctrines of *Christianity*.

It will only remain that we consider which amongst all those Congregations now on Earth, which pretend themselves to be *this* Church of Christ is really and truly *this* Holy *Church* and *Spouse* of Christ. For having once found her, and knowing that she is so assisted by the *Holy Ghost*, that she cannot teach us an Error instead of a Truth, we shall no more dispute the verity of her Doctrines, then we should have questioned the Articles of Faith taught by the Holy Apostles, or the words of *Christ* himself; Wherefore if this *Church* this *infallible Guide* shall teach us, that *Infants are to be Baptised*, that *it is as lawful to desire the Saints departed to pray for us, as to desire the Prayers of those who are living on our behalf*, That *the Body of Christ our Saviour is really and truly present in the Sacrament of the Altar* (or the Lords Supper) or any the like Article of Faith, we shall no more doubt it, then the first Christians did dispute the Verity of what the *Apostles* taught them; when they informed them that they were to believe that *Christ whom they had seen as man was true and very God*, that *a Virgin still remaining a Virgin, might by the power of the Holy Ghost bring forth a Child*. That *that Body of Christ spiritualized might pass through a Dore, the Dore being shut*; That *Three could be One*, and *One Three*. For who shall dare to question what God shall tell him

him to be true. And if God now speaks by the mouth of his present *Church* as he did by the mouth of his *Church* in the times of the *Apostles*, who shall doubt the truth of those words, which proceeded from his mouth.

Wherefore as to this last question, *which is now this present Church of Christ, which is our infallible Guide and Judge appointed by God for our direction, and to whom we are to submit*, as aforesaid. I shall in brief give you that answer, which I profess gave me a full and clear satisfaction; and it is shortly this. The *Protestant Church* of *England* and all other Churches different from the *Roman*, do judge and declare and profess themselves to be *fallible*, even according to the *infallible* VVord of God. If then the said *Protestant Church* of *England* or any other *Churches* different from the *Roman* be *infallible* in all that they judge, and in that they declare and profess to be true according to the VVord of God; they doubtless are then *infallible*, and speak then the *infallible* Truth, when they judge, declare and profess that even according to the Word of God, they are *fallible*. Therefore *infallibly* they are *fallible*. Hence again it being thus proved that no *Church* different from that *Roman* is *infallible*; And it being before proved that God hath appointed *some* Church upon Earth to be our *infallible* Judge, it demonstratively followeth that the *Roman* Church must needs be this *infallible* Judge, because no *Church* different from it (that is none but the *Roman* Church) can be this *infallible* Church. But I pray you do not mistake this Argument, as some have pleased to do, who think the force of it to lye thus, *viz.* The *Ro-*

man Church claimeth *infallibility*, therefore she is *infallible*. This is nothing like the Argument which I put, the force of which lies thus. That the *Church* truly appointed by God for this *infallible* Judge of controversies cannot possibly be any of those *Churches*, which teach themselves not to be this *infallible* Judge because they teach themselves to be Fallible: if then they be infallible in the doctrine they teach, they are infallible when they teach themselves to be fallible. Therefore infallibly they are fallible. Now the Church which is truly appointed by God to be this infallible Judge, must needs have this condition that she doth own her infallibility; but this is far from saying that meerly her owning of infallibility doth make infallibility her own. It is a very different thing to say. *He that must be a Minister must needs be a man and not a woman*, and to say, *That such a one must needs be a Minister because he is a man and not a woman.* So it is one thing to say, the Church which is the infallible Judge must be a Church judging and holding, and professing her self to be infallible; and cannot be a Church, which judgeth and professeth her self to be fallible. And another quite different thing to say, that such a Church is the infallible Judge, because she teacheth and professeth her self to be so.

To this I shall add some few Arguments, which I found drawn from the *Catholicness*, or *Universality*, or *Universal jurisdiction*, which must necessarily be in that Church, which must be this *Rule* and *Judge* before mentioned.

First, that *Church* which is and must be this *Rule* and *Judge*, must necessarily be *Catholick* or *Univer-*

Universal, because no *particular Church* as such can have jurisdiction over other *particular Churches*, these may have controversies amongst themselves, but they owe no subjection one to the other, therefore they are not obliged to submit to each others decisions; but every *particular Church*, as well as Parson, is bound to submit to that *Judge* which God hath appointed to Govern the whole VVorld, and to that *Church* which is that Judge, therefore that *Church* must be *Catholick* or *Universal* as aforesaid; but no *Church* besides that which is called the *Roman*, and of which the *Bishop* of *Rome* is the *Supream Pastor* next under *Christ*, was ever esteemed the *Catholick*, or *Universal Church*, or acknowledged to have an *Universal jurisdiction*, none but those of her Communion were ever generally esteemed *Catholicks*, their very Adversaries allowing them the title of *Catholicks* or *Roman Catholicks*, under what Prince or Prelate soever they live; therefore the *Roman Church* only is this *Rule* and *Judge* before mentioned; therefore *infallible*.

Secondly, if a *particular Church* as such, and without having any lawful *Universal jurisdiction* could be this *Rule* and *Judge*, it would follow, that a *particular Church* as such, would be, and would not be the *Universal* or *Catholick Church* at the same time, which would be a flat contradiction: It would not be the *Universal*, as is supposed in its being bounded within its own particular limits, out of which it hath no lawful Universal *jurisdiction*, and yet it would be the *Universal Church*, as being that to whom the whole VVorld would be obliged to submit, and

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in whose Communion all would be bound to live and continue under pain of Damnation.

Thirdly, if by *particular Churches* we muſt underſtand (as we now intend in *England*) *particular perſwaſions*, *Profeſſions*, or *Sects*, and ſhould allow an *Infallibility* to every one of theſe, it would follow that contradictions would be *infallible truths*, and *all Chriſtians* would at the ſame time be bound to believe, and alſo to disbelieve the ſelf ſame points of Faith. If it ſhould be urged, that every *particular Church* may be an *Infallible Judge* unto it ſelf, though not to others; I anſwer, that this is wholly impoſſible, becauſe *Divine Truths*, *which are in themſelves infallible and ſufficiently propounded by an Authority taught by the Holy Ghoſt*, *are ſuch to all the World*, who are obliged to believe every Article of Divine Faith ſo ſufficiently propounded by ſuch an Authority; but if every *particular Church* (as this objection is) ſhould be *this Rule* and *Judge*, or *ſuch* a *Rule* and *Judge* as were *Infallible*: It would follow in effect, that every *particular Church* ſhould be an *Univerſal Church*, or *the Univerſal Church*: Or, (which is the ſame thing) *a Church having power to oblige all the World to ſubmit to its Decrees and Judgements as guided by the Holy Ghoſt*; for every Decree and Judgement of ſuch an Authority thus *infallible*, would be an *infallible* Truth; conſequently, it would oblige the whole World, unto whom it is ſufficiently propounded to ſubmit unto it as unto the *Apoſtles* if they were living; and hence it could alſo follow, that we ſhould have as many *Univerſal Churches*, as we have *particular Churches*, as many

many *Heads* as we have *Parts* and *Members*; and finally, we should have a *Church* wherein every part should be both *Head* and *Heels*. Therefore since no *particular Church* as such, can be this *Catholick* or *Universal Church*; and since this *Rule*, *Guide* and *Judge* appointed by God, is according to the Apostles Creed, and must be of necessity a *Church Catholick*, or *a Church endowed with an Universal jurisdiction*, the whole World being obliged under pain of Damnation to be in her Communion, and to submit unto her: And since no other Church besides the *Roman* can be assigned, to whom such an *Universality* can be Attributed? It will necessarily follow, that the said *Roman Church*, and no other is this *Rule*, *Guide* and *Judge*.

And now that I may conclude my whole proof with an argument from *Heaven*, and by a Testimony of the highest nature, make it evident to you, that this *Roman Catholick Church* must be this Church, which God hath appointed to be this *Guide* and *Judge*; I shall insist upon the *gift of miracles*, this was that testimony which *our blessed Redeemer* did himself produce, as his Letters of credence, and as both *necessary* and *sufficient* to prove his Mission: *If I had not* (saith our Lord Jo. 15. 24.) *done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin*, namly in not beleiving me to be the *Messias*. God therefore hath decreed it as a Law, that *whosoever refuseth to beleive and submit unto that Authority, to which he sets his hand and seal, by bestowing on it the gift of Miracles, that person committeth sin*: The Reason is given in the same Text, *viz.* because he thereby sheweth that he

hateth

hareth God, namly by not beleiving him. Now I urge. But the *Roman Catholick Church* hath done *works* and *miracles* amongst us, such as no other *Christian Church* upon earth hath done, therefore if we give credit to any *other Church* or *Churches*, and disbeleive or refuse to beleive her, we shall have sin, and shew our selves to be haters of God. Now that the *Roman Church* hath done these Works or Miracles, is a thing so evident both by the Testimonies of the Holy Fathers, and authorities of approved Historians, that those who deny it, must shew themselves either not to be men, or men who purposely shut their eyes against the Truth, yea Heathens and Atheists will be as justifiable in their denyals of the *Miracles* related in the Old and New-Testaments, as those will be who deny these. The *Magdeburgences* who were all professed, and known *Lutherans*, do (almost) in every one of their *centuries*, recount multitudes of *miracles*, wrought by persons whom they affirm to have been infected with what they call *Popery*, namly by St. *Bernard*, St. *Malachy*, St. *Dominick*, St. *Francis* and the like, as you may perticularly see in *Brerely* if you examine the several places to which his Index at the word *miracles* will referr you, by which it will appear that most of those *miracles* were done, not in confirmation of those points and Articles of Faith which you hold with us, but even of those points and doctrines, which you call *Popish Superstitions* and *Idolatries* as the *Sacrifice of the Holy Mass*, the *Respect* and *veneration which is given to Saints Reliques*, *Images*, &c. certainly there are few amongst you but have heard and read how and what *Christian Faith* was first brought into *England*

gland, amongst our Progenitors the *Saxons*, and by whom brought in; It was by St. *Austin* a *monk* of St. *Benets* Order and his fellow *monks*, sent hither by St. *Gregory* the then *Pope of Rome*; and it was the same faith that *Catholicks* now teach, which was then confirmed by wonderful *miracles* from Heaven, as is testifyed by our own Writers venerable Sr. *Bede* and others; yea and by our Protestant Chronologers *Holinsheads* Chronicle the last Edition, Vol. 1. book 5. c. 21. pag. 100. 102. *Fox* his *Acts and monuments* printed Anno 1576. pag. 117. *Stowes Anall.* Printed Anno 1592. pag. 66. *Goodwin* in his *Catalogue of the Bishops in England*, pag. 4. also *Fox* in his aforesaid book at the word *miracles* in the Index. To this I shall add the authorities of our own late Protestant Writers, for the proof of undoubted *miracles* wrought in this *latter age*, in the book Intituled *A report of the Kingdome of Congo a Region of Affrick* Printed Anno 1597. published by Mr. *Abraham Hartwel servant to the Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury* mention is made l. 1. c. 1. of the Discovery of that Kingdome Anno 1587. by *Odoardo Lopez*, and of the conversion thereof to the Christian Faith, l. 2. c. 2. and of the great and *undoubted miracles* shewed by God, in the presence of an whole Army, l. 2. c. 3. insomuch that the said *Hartwel* in his Epistle there to the Reader confesseth that this conversion of *Congo* was accomplished by *Massing Priests*, and after the *Romish* manner, and (saith he) *This Action which tendeth to the glory of God, shall it be concealed, and not committed to memory, because it was preformed by Popish Priests and Popish means? God Forbid!* In the like manner Mr. *John Pory* of *Gonvile*

ville and Caius Colledge *in* Cambridge *in his Geographical History of Africa* Published Anno 1600. pag. 410. 413. commendeth Mr. *Hartwel* for Publishing the aforesaid *miracles*, and acknowledgeth the same. If any of you should chance to say that this Testimony of *miracles* is nothing to you, because you have never seen a *miracle*: I answer, either you grant what these Authors reports to be true, or you deny their testimony refusing to beleive what you have not seen; if you grant the truth of these things, and yet remain out of the Communion of the Holy *Catholick Church*, upon which God hath conferred this gift *You have Sin, and hate God*, according to the argument framed by our Lord himself, which I have before cited. If you refuse to beleive what you have not seen, *first* you destroy *Faith which is an evidence of things not seen*. *Secondly* you take away all *humane conversation*, no man must beleive another. *Thirdly*, you make it unjust for Civil Magistrates to punish Traytors, or Felons, for where there is no Law, there can be no breach of a Law, and if there be no law to him, who did not actually see the very statute which was passed in Parliament, and hear the King and both Houses agree unto it, (as in this case there is no *miracle* to him who did not see it) how can you with justice condemne, and execute a Malefactor, who shall urge at the Bar, that he never saw the Statute upon which he stands Indicted, nor had any notice or knowledge thereof, otherwise then by *hearsay* and the *Report of Authors* and *books*, which since they are no sufficient Proofes of Gods setting his Hand and Seal to a Law, by *miracles*, he sees no reason why

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they ſhould be Proofs for the paſſing that Statute, conſequently that as to him, that Statute is not in force. What you would reply to one who ſhould give this for his Plea upon ſuch an Indictment, ſuppoſe as ſaid unto your ſelf, in the caſe of *miracles not ſeen* by you, but reported by good Authority. Laſtly, this would excuſe all Infidels, who have been ſince the Apoſtles times, and even thoſe who lived in their times, in caſe they *ſaw* no *miracles*. But if any of you ſhall further ſay after the Learned *Chillingworth*, that *God in his Juſtice may permit ſome true miracles to be wrought to delude men who have forged many*. I anſwer, that by this you help the *Iews*, who refuſed to beleive the Doctrines of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, notwithſtanding their Miracles, for why may not they ſay, *God in his Juſtice for our Sins might permit theſe true miracles to be wrought by Ieſus, and his Apoſtles, to delude us who have forged many?* I hope this anſwer will ſatisfy any Rational perſon; but if it doth not I have another anſwer to give out of Mr. *Chillingworths* own words, pag. 144. *It is impoſſible that God ſhould lye, and that the eternal Truth ſhould ſet his hand and Seal to the confirmation of a falſehood, or of ſuch doctrine as is partly true and partly falſe. The Apoſtles doctrine was thus,* (viz. by Miracles) *confirmed, therefore it was intirely true, and in no particular falſe or uncertain.* If you reply this contradicts Mr. *Chillingworths* former poſition, I muſt anſwer, that if Mr. *Chillingworth* be found to contradict himſelf, relying upon his own Reaſon, it is not my fault, nor doth it make any thing againſt our Church.

But be not (I pray) ſo far miſtaken, as ſome

some are usually, and wilfully, if not maliciously, to think that when I speak of the Roman Church, I intend the Church of the Diocess of Rome, and so pretend to make a particular Church to be an *Universal*, and the *Universal* or Catholick Church of Christ. No, I intend by *the Roman Church, all that vastly extended community of Christians, which live in communion with, and in subjection and obedience unto the Bishop of Rome, as to their Supreme Pastor and Governour on Earth in things appertaining unto Faith next under Christ.* This is the Flock of Christ adhereing to the true Shepheard appointed them by God.

By this time I hope it will appear evident, from the foregoing particulars, (if duly considered) that the differences between Catholicks, and those who stand divided from them, are not so many, nor yet so strangely difficult as they have been hitherto conceived to be. In truth, I know but one single point in dispute between us; and that is, that we follow a several Rule, Guide and Judge in the great Affairs of Faith. *All* on *all* sides agree that they are bound on pain of Damnation, to believe all truths sufficiently propounded to them, to be revealed of God, and to obey and submit unto that Guide, Rule, Judge and Authority, which God hath instituted and appointed to Teach and Govern them: the Reason is, because whosoever denies any thing which is sufficiently propounded to him, to be revealed by God, denies *Gods Veracity*, and makes *God a lyar*. Nor can any of you shew any other Reason, why by denying the *Trinity* or the *Incarnation*, Gods Veracity is denyed, and God there-

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by made a lyar, but becauſe the *Trinity* and the *Incarnation* are ſufficiently propounded as Divine Revelations; therefore if the Real Preſence or Purgatory be as ſufficiently propounded as the Trinity or Incarnation, by denying them, Gods Veracity is alſo denyed, and God thereby made a lyar. And for this Reaſon I have no doubt but that ſo ſoon as you ſhall diſcern that you have been hitherto miſtaken in your Guide, and in your Rule and Judge, all thoſe differences which you now imagine irreconcileably will ſoon vanish; and you will as readily follow the true Guide, and believe thoſe Truths which God by that Guide and Authority ſhall and doth require you to believe, as you have formerly believed other points which were as difficult, and which you have nevertheleſs ſubmitted unto, as believing them to be revealed of God. I hope I have here clearly proved, that the ſeveral Guides which you have hetherto followed, are unable to perform the office of Guides, or to make you agree amongſt your ſelves, conſequently, that none of them can be that Guide, Rule, Judge or Authority, which God hath appointed for your direction, and to teach Faith unto the World: I have alſo (as I hope) plainly ſhewn unto you, that the Guide which Catholicks follow is ſuch and the ſame in effect as the firſt Chriſtians followed in the times of the Apoſtles, and in every reſpect able and ſufficient to execute its Function; and indeed, the only means imaginable, not only to teach & convey Faith unto the World, but alſo to reconcile all differences ariſing, or which may at any time ariſe amongſt

Christians in matters of Faith, as also to evict and condemn all Hereticks and Schismatick and to establish that Union which becomes the Church of God, and which is necessary to be in that great and orderly Body Politick, which Christ Jesus our Wise Legislatour hath setled in the World: I have also (as I conceive) sufficiently manifested that this Guide and Judge which Catholicks follow is infallible, and hath sufficient credentials from Heaven, to prove her self to be so; consequently, that we are obliged to captivate our Understandings unto the Judgements and Decrees of this Guide and Judge, as the first Christians did submit their Understandings and Reasons to the Decrees of the Holy Apostles, by which means only all disputes about Religion will have an end. I confess I am very sencible that it will be very difficult for you who have hetherto been every one of you his own independent Master and Teacher, and believed none but himself; and made his own perticular Reason, Will and Understanding his own *Idol*, and God whom he worshipped and served: I say it will be very difficult for you to captivate this Understanding, and subject it to the guidance of any Authority, be it never so highly Divine; But yet when I consider that in your daily practice, and even in the matters relating to your Souls, you do submit unto external Authorities, and that without any evidence of Reason produced by those Authorities, to whom you do submit; as for instance, who is there amongst you that doth not submit, to give obedience, and pay a duty to such and such Persons, as your lawful

lawful Parents and Prince, without any other evidence then the testimonies of lawful Witnesses, to prove those persons to be such? Nay, which of you will deny that God may with justice damn you, if you should deny to give obedience unto, and to acknowledge such Persons as your lawful Parents and Princes, who are by such Testimonies proved to be such? I cannot but hope that when you shall have seriously considered the premises, and how much the Testimony of God by Miracles, and the other Testimonies produced on the behalf of this Authority, and for proof of God having appointed this Guide and Judge, to direct and teach, and to convey Faith unto the World; you will readily submit your understandings to its teaching and guidance, and the rather when you shall have considered that as those Books of Scripture, which you are pleased to accept as Gods Word written, and Divine Revelation were first delivered unto you by Catholicks, and accepted of by your Ancestors upon the score and word of Roman Catholick Priests and Monks, together with the same sence and interpretation, which the Roman Catholick Church now teacheth, and which was then confirmed by Miracles as aforesaid. For my part I could never as yet meet with any tolerable solid Reason, why we should take the word of this Church for the Letter of Scripture, more then for the sence and meaning of it, which is the most principal part of Gods Word, and why this Church should not deserve credit in both as well as in one, being no less against her conscience, and as much in

her power to have corrupted the Letter as much as the sence.

But yet after all this I fear some of you will blame me, for having joyned with this Catholick Church, to which by Gods Mercy I am united, and judge me as having taken the wrong way. To those who shall remain so perswaded, I make this humble request, and conjure them by all the obligations of brotherly love, and as they have any charity for my soul, that they will please to tell me. *First*, whether they themselves are certain past all possibility of being mistaken, that the Christian Religion is the only safe way to Salvation *i. e.* whether they are infallibly sure of this point, and how come they to be so infallibly assured? *Secondly*, whether they have the same assurance, and from the same grounds, or from what grounds that this sort of Christianity, wherein I now worship God is erroneous and damnable? *Thirdly*, supposing I were willing upon their perswasions to relinquish this way, wherein I now am; what sort of Christianity, (*viz.* whether the way of the *Lutheran* or *Calvinist* of the *Greek* Church, or of the *Armenian* or *Ethiopian*, or whether the way of the English Independents, or Anabaptists, or Quakers, or of the Fifth-Monarchy men, or the way of the new *Arrians* or *Socinians*, or any other and what) shall I follow, and why, as the only secure way to Salvation? Or is it enough to secure my Salvation, if I be a Christian opposing the Roman Church, and believe, or disbelieve what I please, so it be in contradiction to the Roman Church? *Fourthly*, whether they, who would

would teach me that sort of Christianity to be the only Religion, wherein Salvation is to be attained, which they would have me follow and embrace, be infallible in their teaching of this particular? *Fifthly*, whether they are infallibly sure that all who do not follow and embrace that sort of Christianity, which they would have me follow and embrace, shall be damned? *Sixthly*, supposing that they are not infallible in these particulars, whether will it not rationally and necessarily follow that, possibly I may at the present be in the Right Way, and they in an Error? and if so, what Reason can they give why I should forsake my present Guide, whom I believe to be infallible, to follow them who confess they may be, and therefore for ought they know, are at present mistaken in what they believe and practice? In fine, if they will say any thing to satisfie me, they must ascert something with certainty; for who knows not that if a man will give himself scope to be bold, he may raise Arguments against the belief of the Trinity, or any other mystery of Faith, which will trouble Learned men to answer: But I love not the old Method of destroying and pulling down without first ascerting what you would establish; we sadly remember the cries, *no Bishops, no House of Lords, no King, no Liturgy*; and that those who were engaged in those Mutinies, knew no more then *what they would not have*, viz. *No Government or Laws in Church or State*; but they

would never declare what it was they aimed at, otherwiſe then by their actions which tended to *Atheiſm* and *Anarchie*. They would Plunder and Ruin a man, for being (as they termed it) for ſome *Form, viz.* for ſome ſetled Worſhip or Government in the Church; but thoſe who were againſt all *Form*, all manner of *Worſhip* or *Government* were by them cheriſhed as their Brethern: I pray if you adviſe me againſt what I am now engaged in, have a care above all things, that you do not proceed in that way of *Negatives*, leaſt I avoid you as ſuſpecting that you are again perſwading me into the way of *Rebellion* and *Treaſon*, which (I thank my God) I have now Learned to hate and abhor as much as Hell and Dammation.

And now (deareſt Friends) I have no more to ſay, but only entreat you in the bowels of Charity to learn by heart that moſt pretious Leſſon of our ſweet Saviour, viz. *Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart.* And that you may be in a ready way to learn this, remember (in order to it) that Leſſon (which I mentioned before) of his beloved Apoſtle St. John 4. 6. *We are of God, he that knoweth God heareth us, he that is not of God heareth us not, hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and the ſpirit of error.* There was nothing then required to diſtinguiſh theſe two ſpirits, but to hear, or to refuſe to hear the Apoſtles, and ſeeing St. *Paul* ſaith, *Faith comes by hearing*; It will be as neceſſary now to hear in our times, thoſe who are lawfully ſent to teach it, as it was

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in the times of the Apoſtles. If therefore ye hear no body, or follow thoſe who at firſt, and in their beginning heard no body, you refuſe to hear thoſe who are ſent to teach you. And then according to St. *Iohn*, it is evident you are lead by the Spirit of error. Conſider theſe things and be happy, according to the Prayers of,

Your true Friend and well-

wiſher in the beſt things,

Robert Everard.

POSTSCRIPT.

MY first Edition of this Epistle was spent before several of my Friends had notice of it, which put me upon a necessity of going to the Press this second time. If any of you should be inquisitive to know why in this second Edition I have made so many material Additions in several places, as they will find me to have done; I shall give them this true answer; that it was not that I did suspect the other to be insufficient, for I saw reason enough to believe it could not be answered (why else have so many of you who promised answers, failed in the performance of your promises?) but upon occasional discourses finding it to be given out that I had done my *All* in that first Edition, and finding several well minded persons desirous to have some perticulars farther explained and inculcated, were the true Motives to my incerting these Additions; and yet I have taken care that what I have added should not be tedious, for had I published all that I have collected upon this subject, (and *I* again profess these things which I here publish to be no more then Collections) they would have swelled into a Volume not only too chargeable in

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point of expence, but such as would have required more time in perusing, then most of those to whom it is addressed can without prejudice take from their other occasions: Besides, if this little part of what I could have represented to your considerations be more then any of you or all of you can answer, it is sufficient for my purpose. You see my confidence which I conceive doth not misbecome me, my cause being considered. Indeed, I do now think it improbable, though (to continue in the words of my former Postscript) I apprehend that it is not imppossible but that some of you will be Attempting to Answer this Letter, and endeavouring to shake these principles, which have by Gods Grace proved of strength to win me to the Holy Catholick Faith. To such, I shall only give these Cautions. First that they will be pleased in their Answer, to take notice of this my *Second Edition*, and of the Additional Arguments and Reasons here given, and to set down my own words as they lye intirely, and without maiming them: If they shall please to Answer by Paragraphs and to set down each of my Paragraphs wholly and sincerely before their Answer to the same Paragraph, I shall own their Candor and

Justice

Juſtice; but if they Anſwer by ſetting up a Puppit of their own, pretended to be mine, they will not make mine, but their own Arguments Ridiculous; and will not deſerve a Reply from me, or to be regarded by any one. Secondly, that they will forbear all Reproaches and Slanders againſt the Catholick Church, or Catholicks in general or in perticular; this is a fault to which Proteſtants are too much addicted in general; but moſt perticularly thoſe of the Presbiterian and Independent perſwaſions, they have alwaies uſed to deal with Chatholicks, as they did with His late Majeſty of Glorious Memory, and with our moſt Dread Soveraign that now is, and their Party, *viz.* To impute Crimes to them without end, and Errors innumerable; without taking care to examine whether what they charged them with was true or falſe. So if they can throw dirt enough upon the Catholicks, and impute Opinions unto them ſufficiently monſtrous, all is well, they know the Major part of the Nation to be byaſſed with Intereſt, and ready enough to beleive what ever is ſuggeſted againſt thoſe whom they call the *Common Enemy*, and that thouſands will admit a thing for truth if they find it in Print, rather then take

take the pains to examine whether it be true or not, and therefore have no difficulty to cast forth untruths, with as much confidence as if themselves were satisfied, that all they publish is dictated by the Holy Ghost: As for those that are and shall be guilty of these crimes, I only wish them the like Repentance which St. *Augustine* had for the like errors committed by himself whilst he was a *Manichean*, of which he makes this mention, St. *Aug.* the 6. Book of his Confes. C. 3. towards the end. *I blush even full of Joy in regard that I found my self thereby not to have barked against the Catholick Faith, but against the Fancies and Fictions of carnal thoughts. But yet I had been rash and impious in that I had said those things accusingly which I ought to have learnt enquiringly.* Nor do not (I beseech you) take a liberty to upbraid me as if I had some private ends in my present change; but be pleased to consider, that I am now united to a Communion, whose portion in this Kingdome is to suffer, to be poor and scorned,, to want Preferments and suffer affronts from every hand who shall please to give them. Whilst I was at the Head of a Troop of Horse in the Rebellious Army (a sin which I hope my dearest Saviour hath forgiven, I having

ving heartily asked pardon of my God as I here do of my Soveraign for the same) I was in a condition to rise, and thrive, and glut my sences with what this world called good and pleasing; but I thank my Saviour I am now brought home to that Church of His, which teacheth me to suffer and be Humble; to give Obedience to Authorities for Conscience sake; to become a Servant and a Learner, not a Master or a Teacher; to hear those that are lawfully sent to take care of my soul, and not to usurpe the Office of the Priests, or proudly to intrude my self into that Sacred Function. I must for ever hereafter cease to be contentious, and let my Prince or those who are in Authority under him determine what they please in relation to my Body or Estate; I hope I shall at all times hereafter follow the blessed Precepts of God, which I receive from the mouth of his Church, and from the Holy Scriptures, namely, *To make Supplications and Prayers, and Intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men, for Kings and all that are in Authority, that I may lead a quiet life in all godlinesse and honesty*, 1 Tim. 2. v. 1, 2. *and to those who shall be otherwise minded I shall only say*, We have no such Custome amongst us in the Church of God.

If there be any who hath any Value for the Authority of the great St. *Auſtin*, I ſhall beſeech them to read this following Text of that Saint, and to conſider whether I have not in my Proceedings Obſerved his Rule and Method. And let them but change the word *Manichæus* into *John Calvin*, and how neerly it will concern them.

St. Aug. againſt the *Epiſt.* of *Manicheus* which they call Fundamental *c.* 5. *Edit. Paris Tom.* 6. 1. 46.

IF thou ſhalt find any one who doth not as yet beleive the Goſpel, what wilt thou do when he ſhall ſay unto thee I do not beleive? But neither had I beleived the Goſpel unleſs I had been thereunto moved by the Authority of the Catholick Church: Thoſe therefore to whom I ſubmitted, when they required me to beleive the Goſpel, why ſhould I not alſo yield Obedience unto them when they direct me not to beleive Manichæus? *Take your choice; If you tell me I muſt beleive the Catholicks, they give me Advice not to give credit to you, and therefore if I beleive them I cannot but refuſe to beleive you. If you tell me I muſt not beleive the Catholicks; you proceed ill, when you go about by the Goſpel to perſwade me to beleive* Manichæus, *becauſe it was from the Preachings of the Catholicks that I believed the Goſpel it ſelf. If you tell me I did well when I believed the Catholicks praying the Goſpel, but I do ill when I believe the ſame perſons*

ſons decrying Manichæus, *do you take me to be ſo ſtupid as without any Reaſon given unto me I ſhould believe or disbelieve what you pleaſe?* &c. *But if you have any Reaſon to offer unto me, lay aſide the Goſpel; if you hold your ſelf to the Goſpel I ſhall adhear to thoſe upon whoſe commands I believe the Goſpel, and ſo long as I obey them I ſhall not believe you. But if by Accident you ſhould find any thing in the Goſpel moſt evidently touching the Apoſtleſhip of* Manichæus, *you will weaken the Authority of the Catholicks in my eſteem who require me not to believe you, but that being weakned I ſhall not believe the Goſpel, becauſe I believe that by them; ſo that whatſoever you bring from the Goſpel will be of no force with me. Wherefore if nothing be found in the Goſpel for the manifeſtation of* Manichæus *his Apoſtleſhip, I ſhall rather give credit to the Catholicks then you. But if any thing ſhall be there found manifeſt on the behalf of* Manichæus, *I ſhall neither believe them nor you: Not them, becauſe they told me a lye of you; nor ſhall I believe you, becauſe you urge that Scripture to me which I believed upon their Authority who told me a lye in relation to you,* &c.

FINIS.

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